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COMMONWEAL

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CORRESPONDENCE

God's design

Wausau, Wis.

To the Editors: Your March 27 issue could be subtitled, "Here We Go Again."

It boggles the imagination to wonder what the Catholic church would be like today if, in 1969, officialdom had affirmed that the creation account describes two distinct aspects of human sexuality, procreative (Gen. 1:27-28) and relational (Gen. 2:18-25) and had affirmed that committed loving is the essential element that makes the man/woman sexual relationship like Christ's relationship with the church (Eph. 5:28-33). And then affirmed, boldly and courageously, the conviction — held by so many of the faithful — that God's design for human sexuality is violated when either procreation or relational sex is separated from ongoing, committed loving; it is not necessarily violated when procreative and relational sex are separated.

What if the church had challenged the sexual myths of our culture by proclaiming that the connection between sexual intercourse and an emotionally close, loving relationship has evolved as the essential factor in the fulfillment of our human sexuality — that sex without this connection is empty and unsatisfying?

Today, there are budding signs of change in society's views. Some sexology experts now recognize that emotionally close loving, not pleasure, is the key to sexual satisfaction. Increasingly, commitment is being recognized as a crucial factor in aiding the growth of emotional closeness.

But where does the church stand today? The church is still hung up on preserving the connection between sexual intercourse and procreation as the connection essential to God's design, thereby relegating to irrelevancy both the connection between relational sex and committed loving and the connection between procreation and a committed love relationship. And possibly relegating church officialdom itself to irrelevancy.

MARILYN KRAMER

Faith & fertility

Beaumont, Tex.

To the Editors: Regarding your March 27 editorial on the Vatican's recent "Instruction" on human life, I believe you did an excellent job delineating the structural and tonal problems with the document. You also articulated well the deficiencies in its approach.

The document emphasized the danger of viewing children as products for consumption. As a society, we already go to a destructive extreme in avoiding children; now we are headed toward the polar opposite — manufacturing children or renting wombs at any cost. Genetic engineering is on the horizon.

One central issue not well articulated in the document, is the relationship of faith and fertility. That is, how do couples situate questions about their fertility within the context of their relationship with God? As one who has in the past struggled with infertility, I believe we have to ask a hard question: Do we have an absolute right to a child? Granted the technology, it is a difficult question for many to answer. The church's answer (No) is difficult to swallow, especially in a country that currently functions in part, on the notion of the supremacy of individual rights, constitutional or otherwise.

John Garvey's excellent column in the same issue contains an indirect response. I will alter one of his sentences in order to make my point: "The individualism of our culture, the assumption that happiness lies in the satisfaction of desire, the unwillingness to question desire itself, all stand in the way of an appreciation of *the cross of infertility*." When a human desire is proclaimed as a right, if there is a way, then there is an entrepreneurial will to solve the problem. Through the eyes of faith, I think we are called to endure some of the cards which life deals us, and to frame such experiences within the Pascal Mystery.

The "Instruction," in addition to nearly downplaying adoption and other forms of service, fruitfulness, and generativity, provides no such vision for couples to reflect upon. I do not believe our call is so much to prevent such suffering, but to help carry each other's burdens, including barrenness. The church is questioning the appropriateness of alleviating the suffering of barrenness through the manufacturing of children.

In redesigning our fertility, in either the avoiding or achieving mode, we begin to unravel the threads of the "seamless garment" ethic. The Vatican's "Instruction," however imperfect it may be, is pointing toward the social and theological meaning of the use of technology in solving human problems.

CHARLES BALSAM

A question of means

Philadelphia, Pa.

To the Editors: Of the "Instruction on Respect for Human Life . . ." you write ["What Comes Naturally," March 27], "It views morality as a matter of articulating laws, and these laws are found inscribed in the natural form of marital intercourse." True, but, I would submit, only partly. In two sentences the Instruc-

(continued on page 364)

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COMMONWEAL

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Im---ch Reagan?

A few weeks ago a man was disqualified from the presidency for apparently failing to honor his marriage vows. Should another man continue to occupy the presidency despite his circumvention of a public, solemn oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and to take care, as that Constitution charges him, that the laws be faithfully executed?

It is becoming clearer and clearer to the American people that Mr. Reagan, not to put too fine a point on it, is a liar and a cheat. An amiable liar and cheat, perhaps; a perpetually bemused one; maybe even one sincerely convinced that all this flimflam is his duty to a higher cause—but a liar and a cheat nonetheless. Two years ago, representatives of the president assured Congress that the administration understood the Boland Amendment to prohibit "soliciting and/or encouraging" other countries to aid the *contras*. "Nobody is trying to play games with . . . Congress," replied Langhorne C. Motley, the president's special spokesman on Central American questions, when asked in March 1985 whether the administration was seeking "some loophole" around the congressional restriction. "That resolution stands, and it . . . . is pretty plain English. . . . And we are going to comply with that." Now Mr. Reagan boasts that he has always been deeply involved in decisions about *contra* aid. He claims never to have personally solicited aid from other countries, but the evidence is overwhelming that he at least encouraged it—and knew of soliciting done by others in the administration. None of this, the White House now says, was ever prohibited by the Boland Amendment. As usual, Mr. Reagan has given himself a little margin of vagueness to play with, but the obvious question is why, if the president was well informed about *contra* aid all along, if it was even, as he says, "my idea to begin with," if he saw nothing wrong in his conversations with King Fahd of Saudi Arabia or in clearcut instances of soliciting funds by other administration officials, then why didn't he mention any of this before? Why wait until Robert C. McFarlane's testimony to Congress had blasted holes in the picture of a completely detached and unknowing president?

President Reagan's sudden recovery of memory is only the latest twist in a plot that remains, nonetheless, rather simple: Congress passed a law that the administration didn't like, so the administration set out to disobey it. It was obvious from the start that responsibility for this did not begin and end with a few "cowboys" in the White House basement. Responsibility stretched back to the Oval Office, to the worldview the president favored and the mode of operation he had approved. Now it simply becomes clearer that the effort to evade the law also involved a good deal of direct knowledge and participation by Mr. Reagan.

This central truth has been obscured as much as it has been elucidated by the congressional hearings. Writing in the *New York Times*, David E. Rosenbaum noted

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the congressional committee members' failure to follow through on their questioning. Despite Robert C. McFarlane's acknowledgment of "dozens" of discussions with the president about *contra* aid, the committee never really pursued the details of those conversations. But the committee's failure goes deeper. With the encouragement of the president's defenders on the committee, witnesses regularly voice paeans to the policy of backing Nicaragua's "democratic resistance." One does not have to be a supporter of the Sandinistas to question these views as ignorant and simplistic. General Secord may be well informed on managing Swiss bank accounts and air drops; he shows no knowledge of Central America. Robert Owen's repeated praise for the "democratic resistance" stands in stark contrast to the memo he earlier sent Colonel North, describing Adolfo Calero as a U.S.-creation and a "strongman" surrounded by liars and people motivated by greed. Yet insofar as these hearings touch on the substance of the administration's Nicaraguan policy rather than its evasion of the Boland Amendment, the discussion has been conducted entirely on the administration's terms. Those who know better have let these flag-waving defenses of administration policy go unchallenged while they concentrate on the mundane details of dates and grocery lists. As this rhetorical sediment builds up—and what else can one call Mr. Owen's closing apostrophe to "Ollie," the "legend" confronted by "treacherous" enemies but supported by "the greatest leader the free world has known"?—the chances diminish for any rational examination of the issues at hand. Whether the U.S. should support the *contras* or, even more important, whether the president should hold himself above the law are not questions to be resolved by anti-Communist buzz words. Nor, for that matter, should such questions turn upon the possibility that General Secord was overcharging for grenades or Oliver North bought snow tires out of government funds.

The public is reportedly treating Congress's hearings with a yawn, and under these circumstances, it may be just as well. Congress's lackluster performance has other sources, of course. The president remains popular (although scarcely one in four adults now believes he is telling the truth about the diversion of funds to the *contras*); his term in office is running

Corporate comeback strategies

In the past three years, tens of thousands of market-driven executives have taken bold initiatives to restore pride in and boost productivity at American firms, implementing a symbiotic interface between state-of-the-art technology and an increasingly entrepreneurial corporate culture. By eliminating redundant layers of middle management, these deal-cutting mavericks have impacted synergistically on their lean-and-mean firms, strategically repositioning them on the cutting edge of tomorrow's technology. The obvious question is: What ever happened to the tens of thousands of indecisive, unimaginative, demoralizing old fogies they replaced?

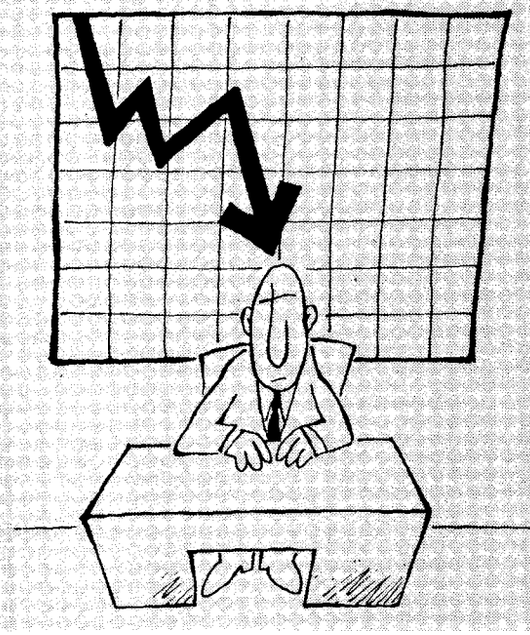
"They come to us," says Ganelon Fitzsimmons, president of Executive Deadbeat, a Gary, Indiana, executive search firm specializing in the recruitment and placement of senior executives. "There's a burgeoning market out there for chronic losers and would-be has-beens because, believe it or not, a lot of American companies function best with these retreads at the top."

"We love intransigent old coots who are opposed to innovation," says Fred Chilton, chief financial officer of American Worm, a Lowell, Massachusetts, bait-and-tackle wholesaler that has recently hired several dozen executives shown to the door by their employers. "Who needs innovation in the worm business?"

"We like our managers to have their feet firmly planted in the distant past," chimes in Lancelot Thorpe, product manager of Federal Broom. Broom's motto is: "What will work two weeks from tomorrow probably worked three weeks from yesterday."

Outplacement specialists agree that senior executive job opportunities are waiting in the low-tech and no-tech fields, particularly for seasoned veterans with deplorable interpersonal skills.

"The first thing we look for in candidates seeking a senior management position is a gloomy disposition," says Greystone Black, personnel director of Planters for Peanuts, the nation's largest fast-mortician chain. "We don't want morale to be high in this business. It makes our customers suspicious."



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out; and official Washington is reluctant to shake one of its pillars again. So no one dares breathe the "I" word. Quite the contrary. It is apparently better to rewrite the Constitution than to admit that Mr. Reagan and his administration have transgressed it.

Indeed, while the Constitution is being bicentennialized in Philadelphia, it is being trounced in Washington. Even a cursory reading of this document reveals how untenable are assertions that foreign policy is a presidential preserve which Congress has no business entering. The enumeration of Congress's powers specifically includes providing for the common defense, regulating foreign commerce, defining and punishing piracies on the high seas and offenses against the law of nations, declaring war, raising, supporting, and regulating armed forces—in addition to the general power of the purse. The president is appointed commander in chief of the armed forces, and his specific enumerated powers include making treaties (with the advice and consent and two-thirds approval of the Senate), the nomination and appointment of ambassadors (again with the advice and consent of the Senate), and the reception of ambassadors and public ministers from other lands. In *The Federalist Papers*, Hamilton emphatically contrasts the unshared power of the British sovereign in foreign affairs with the president's need to obtain the legislature's concurrence. The Constitution makes the executive branch the sole agent of foreign policy but not its sole formulator. So much for "original intent." To be sure, the pressure of events has worked to shift foreign policy-making into the executive's hands from the very start of the Republic, culminating in the president's power to initiate nuclear war. But accommodations to necessity should not be erected into matters of principle. The shared responsibilities of president and legislature for foreign policy are the constitutional norm, not some congressional encroachment.

Mr. Reagan's apologists maintain, in effect, that the president can do whatever he wants internationally unless Congress explicitly prohibits it—with the burden on Congress to contrive legislation that a clever White House lawyer can't circumvent. This turns the Constitution upside down. The power to conduct wars and spend monies requires congressional *consent*, not just an absence of airtight congressional prohibitions. If the Boland Amendment was limited to agencies "involved in intelligence activities," that was because of the assumption that other agencies would not be conducting covert wars without Congress's authorization. If the Boland Amendment went through different versions, that was in response to a series of lies that the administration told about its commitments in Nicaragua. It is unmitigated gall for presidential apologists to complain today about these limitations or variations. The fine print arose from Congress's susceptibility to compromise and its attempt to exert merely some minimal control over policies that were on the border of legality to begin with.

Even that minimum was too much for this administration. Is the president above the law? Should the Constitution be *de facto* revised so that in the life-and-death arena of international politics we elect an absolute monarch once every four years? These are the grave questions Congress's investigation should be posing, not to the witnesses, but to ourselves.

Many experts say that corporate America's current obsession with trimming salaries is a faddish deviation from tradition, and that there will always be a place in this country for expendable senior-level employees.

"Redundant layers of management are what made America great," says Bambi Rodenda, head of Overnight Bureaucrat, a temporary-help service specializing in emergency paper-shufflers, factotums, and supernumeraries. "Lots of people think that it was the railroads, but, no, it was redundant layers of middle management."

Bingo Latimore, vice-president of Plateaus 'n Things, a Beverly Hills executive search firm, says that the widespread firings have made his job much easier: "Lots of companies out there — particularly in the hinterland — aren't comfortable with the idea of hiring a single intransigent, innovation-resisting executive. What they really want are *dozens* of dull, unimaginative managers to run their dull, uninspiring businesses. We can supply them with entire layers at a time."

Last but not least, Sluggo Terkel, president of Central Nut, Bolt, Nail & Screw (a subsidiary of American Ditch), says that one reason fat cats like him hire fellow fat cats is because senior management cannot decipher the corporate *patois* used by young honchos. "One guy said he was going to produce tangible results by vertically integrating my superstructure through a hands-on approach — provided I didn't mind working in a debased mode," says Terkel. "I called building security."

JOE QUEENAN

Joe Queenan is a free-lance writer based in Tarrytown, New York. His work has appeared in the Wall Street Journal, The New Republic, *and other publications.*

FIRST IN HIS CLASS

Who has more honorary degrees than Herbert Hoover? Surely, the devotees of trivial pursuits have tucked away this tidbit by now. The answer, listed in nearly every recent tribute, is Theodore Martin Hesburgh, C.S.C., president of the University of Notre Dame, who is retiring this month.

By most accounts, Hesburgh's "vital statistics" would appear to include how many other who's whos he's hobnobbed with during his thirty-five years under the Golden Dome; how many committees and commissions he's been appointed to by successive U.S. presidents; how many daily Masses he's said or hasn't said (The answer to the latter is one.); how little he's

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slept; how many miles he's traveled, millions of dollars he's raised, diplomas he's signed, letters per day he's received, or minutes he's spent on the campus in South Bend, Indiana.

Yet a tally of such statistics does not begin to sum up the man. It is to his credit, for example, that he was not only appointed to the Civil Rights Commission (under President Eisenhower), but that he was asked to resign from it while he was chairman. President Nixon apparently found Hesburgh's insistence on human rights more substantial than cosmetic.

As priest and university president, Hesburgh has lived a lifetime of leadership. Perhaps more than any other single individual today, he has clarified the role of the "Catholic university" — demonstrating that the two words are not the oxymoron some have claimed and recent Vatican strictures on higher education seem bent on proving. Hesburgh has shaped a university where Catholic faith, values, and commitment are cultivated as well as academic competence, and where freedom of inquiry is insured for both students and faculty. His personal record of public service has almost everything to do with his conviction that educated Catholics bear particular responsibilities to serve the greater society.

But even educated Catholics deserve a little R & R, every thirty-five years or so. To Father Hesburgh, on his commencement of life in the slow lane (ever drive a moped?), we add our hearty congratulations, admiration, and best wishes.

ET CETERA

● If you close your eyes you may miss yet another example of Reagan administration cheek. At the height (or the depths) of the Congressional investigations into the Iran-*contra*spiracy, the executive branch has notified Congress (fancy this) of its decision to sell advanced fighter jets to Honduras. Until now, it has been official policy for the U.S. never to be the first to introduce advanced fighter planes into Central America. If these weapons sales are approved, that sound policy will have been reversed. The American public is expected not to notice. And if it does, there are always traveler's checks.

● Some of the mourners, including high ranking officials, at former CIA director William J. Casey's funeral Mass last month may have been tempted to doze during Bishop John R. McCann's eulogy, but they were sitting up straight by the final trumpet.

Bishop McGann began by recounting his friendship with Casey, Casey's distinguished service to the country, and the time and energy Casey had so often made available for church activities. But Bishop McGann also recounted disagreements that he, as Casey's pastor, had personally voiced to the director over U.S. nuclear policy and support of the *contras* in Nicaragua. Standing before President Reagan, the bishop reaffirmed the stance of the U.S. Bishops' Conference on war in Central America. McGann said that the bishops "continue to oppose violence wrought in Central America by support of the *contras*."

The bishop's low-key, civil, straightforward reaffirmation has brought him a flood of criticism and negative mail. There is now a move to show him the support his brave gesture deserves. Those who wish may write: The Most Reverend John R. McGann D.D.; St. Agnes Cathedral; 29 Quealy Place; Rockville Centre, NY 11570.

OF SEVERAL MINDS David R. Carlin, Jr.

PREACHING & PRACTICE

JUDGING BY STANDARDS NO LONGER PROFESSED

Since I have written before in this space that one cannot understand America unless one understands American religion, above all American Protestantism in all its parti-coloredness, I am ashamed to admit that I had never even heard of Jim Bakker and his wife, Tammy prior to the moment the news of Jim's adultery broke on page one.

I blame my children for this ignorance on my part. Televangelism is not exactly my spiritual cup of tea, but from time to time of a Sunday morning I'll flip the TV dial in an attempt to find out what's happening. My kids have apparently developed a healthy R.C. prejudice against the more exotic forms of Protestantism. So whenever one of the evangelists shows up on the screen, my kids send up howls of protest. Because of a character flaw which makes me even more unfit than Gary Hart to be president of the U.S. (of this, more later), I am unable to withstand their complaints for more than a minute or two. Off goes the TV set. With regard to knowledge of American religion, then, I am guilty of not practicing what I preach.

That was Jim Bakker's problem, too. He was guilty of not practicing what he preached. Had he been affiliated with a denomination which had a relaxed and non-traditional sexual ethic, which taught, for instance, that adultery in certain circumstances is perfectly OK, then his adultery would have been no big deal. But he was an Assemblies of God minister; he belonged to a religious subculture that insists on a very strict sexual ethic. His adultery, then, made him more than an adulterer; it make him a hypocrite as well.

Gary Hart, on the other hand, despite starting life as a member of the Church of the Nazarene, does not make his living as

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a religious traditionalist. He does not preach a strict sexual ethic. So why did we stone him to death when he was possibly taken in adultery?

"Because he is just as much a hypocrite as Jim Bakker. He pretended to be a good family man." But this is mere convention. For a politician to be photographed with his lovely wife and beautiful children is not tantamount to an affidavit that neither he nor she fools around or that the kids aren't doing drugs.

"Well, adultery isn't really the issue in Gary Hart's case," it is said. "The real issue is his poor judgment." If Hart had shown poor judgment in buying an automobile or choosing a vacation spot, nobody would give a rat's nether quarters.

"But those are small matters; his adultery is a big matter." This is to be guilty of the *petitio principii* fallacy; it is to argue in a circle. Hart's adultery is a big matter because the press chose to make it a big matter — which leaves unproven the assertion that it *should* have been a big matter.

Almost one hundred years before Gary Hart's downfall, Charles Stewart Parnell, the great Irish nationalist, was charged, accurately enough, with having committed adultery with Kitty O'Shea. This badly damaged Parnell's political position, split the nationalist movement, and probably delayed Irish home rule for many years.

I can sympathize with the violent reaction many of the Irish, especially Irish Catholics, had in the Parnell affair. After all, this was the height of the Victorian era, and in sexual matters the Irish Catholics were more Victorian than the Victorians. A strict sexual ethic was a cardinal element in their religion, and it was that religion that had held their community together and given it such dignity as it had through centuries of oppression. To condone Parnell's adultery seemed to many equivalent to condoning an attack on the very nation he was attempting to redeem.

But Americans a century later have no such feelings about sexual morality. We are living on the other side of the sexual revolution. For us, sex, like religion, is a private matter. We no more have a public sexual ethic than we have a public religion. We tolerate premarital sex, postmarital sex, homosexual sex; and we even tolerate relative promiscuity in these three areas. This is not to say that we live this way ourselves, or even that we think it advisable for others to live this way. But we no longer feel free to be publicly censorious of those who elect to use their sexual freedom in ways that offend our taste or judgment.

Back in the old days, in the days before the sexual revolution, adultery was a double sin. It was an offense against purity and an offense against fidelity. And because it was an offense against purity, it was an especially serious form of infidelity. But nowadays it is an offense against fidelity only, and not a terribly serious offense at that, since the subject matter of the infidelity, namely sexual impurity, is no longer considered intrinsically offensive.

This is not to say that I endorse America's prevailing sexual morality, for in fact I do not. But it seems to be unreasonable to hold presidential candidates to Victorian standards while allowing everyone else the right to live by *Playboy* standards. It reminds me of the later Romans, who, in a period of sexual decadence, kept up their fine old custom of burying alive unchaste Vestal Virgins. At least the Romans were sensible enough not to confuse the Vestal Virgins with the emperor. We, on the other hand, seem to believe that candidates for emperor ought to show themselves worthy of Vestal status.

Even prior to the Gary Hart business, we had developed a bizarre process of choosing presidents. The process has now evolved to the point of absolute lunacy. Candidates for the most important office in the most important nation in the world are now being screened out on the basis of a sexual ethic — a sexual ethic, worse still — that nobody publicly professes anymore.

OF SEVERAL MINDS Abigail McCarthy

ONE REMOVE FROM THE REAL

QUALIFIED CANDIDATES WHO DO NOT RUN

Not until the late summer of 1988 — roughly a year and a quarter from now — will the official candidates for president be formally chosen by the conventions of each party. Suppose, by some unlikely chance, that the candidates of the best known prospects are in question until the moment of convention choice, or suppose that a hitherto obscure prospect surfaces as a solution to a convention deadlock. Could the voters make an intelligent choice in the eight to nine weeks left before election? Could they learn enough about the candidates? Could the important issues be explored? Voters who have come of age in the last thirty years are apt to answer, "No," so foreign is the scenario to their experience. They may have become tired, even indifferent, by the almost interminable caucus-and-primary, poll-and-pundit process we now go through, but they are persuaded that it is more of a grassroots way of choosing, which gives the ordinary citizen a greater voice in the political process. But is it? And does it?

Many ordinary citizens would be happy if they could vote for one of the nationally admired men who have refused to submit themselves to the present process — a Mario Cuomo, for example, or a Dale Bumpers. Under present conditions they won't be able to. Governor Cuomo has explained that he cannot run the state of New York and spend the required months campaigning in Iowa, New Hampshire, and the super-Tuesday-primary states. Senator Bumpers cited health and family reasons for eschewing the long and arduous trek to-

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wards the presidency. Howard Baker also renounced the effort as did, a little less certainly, the much-admired Sam Nunn. Couldn't they wait, our citizen might ask, and announce later, thus reducing the wear and tear of the run? Says Hearst columnist Robert Thompson:

> The rich corn fields of Iowa and birch-covered hills of New Hampshire already have been trampled to pulp by the trudging feet of presidential hopefuls. . . . By next February when the voting begins, the candidates will have spent millions of dollars, bought all available television time, and cornered the market on endorsements from all living citizens of Iowa and New Hampshire.

Exaggerated, but pretty much the way it is in this campaign year of 1987.

Other ordinary citizens could wish that distinguished public servants from their states, although not mentioned nationally as presidential possibilities, might rise to that status as "favorite sons." One has only to travel around the country a bit to find that almost every state boasts someone it considers to be of presidential stature. In Washington state on the third of May, for example, the largest metropolitan Sunday paper profiled two of these: one a Republican, Senator and former Governor Dan Evans, and the other, a majority leader of the U.S. House of Representatives, Congressman Tom Foley. Reading these articles, the voter from any state might well ask why the system rules out men of their caliber.

Dan Evans, we are reminded, was the man of whom senior political writer David Broder once said, "No one in government . . . gives me greater reason for optimism about the quality of leadership in this country or the decency of people in public life." In a mock campaign ad never to be aired, as the writer of the profile tells us sadly, Evans is described as "a mature president to lead us through the day, a leader who understands that things are not as simple as they seemed this morning, a leader who deals in ideas and realities as well as images, one who is guided not by a rigid ideology, but by breadth of experience, by keen powers of analysis, and a strong sense of right and wrong."

The associate editor who described Foley is even more positive: "Thomas S. Foley has the most presidential qualities of anyone in the Congress and indeed is one of the most clearly presidential persons in the land." Among the presidential qualities the editor listed are the "remarkable gentlemanly skill of listening to and working with people of both parties and the fact that capitol veterans view Foley as a true internationalist and an expert on trade."

Evans, too, has in the past advocated the presidential primary way of picking candidates as more democratic, but now he is not so sure. "Those most likely to be nominated are those who want it most, but those who want it the most are not necessarily those who would do the best job as president." The process, he fears, may favor extreme ideologues — "narrowly directed, super-charged in their beliefs." Foley simply speaks of the desire to run for the presidency as "a virus" from which he is immune. But to call the desire a virus is to reinforce the growing perception of the present, prolonged ordeal as unhealthy for the body politic.

A final consideration for those who still approve the present process is that campaigners who might well prove to be gradual gainers in states other than Iowa and New Hampshire are apt to be eliminated not so much by voter- as by media-choice. David Broder stated more or less seriously not so long ago that writers and commentators could simply not keep up with all the candidates in the field and would have to narrow their attention to three or four after the initial go-rounds. So it is unlikely that the centrist, the conciliating leader, the down-to-earth officeholder will have as much chance as the colorful, the quotable extremist, the best-financed, and most cleverly packaged.

It has been said that, because of the multiplicity of candidates, no one of them particularly outstanding, the candidates might possibly be picked in brokered conventions next year. Good. The presidential primaries were designed as a legitimate device to challenge an entrenched administration or party apparatus which could be challenged in no other way. They were never meant to foster the perversion of self-selection, commercial merchandising, and game-like media coverage which now constitutes the electoral process. Isn't it better that a man or woman be advanced by the state delegations who have watched him or her grow and develop, who know what manner of officeholder he or she is, and what kind of person? And that the party reach its decision in a representative microcosm in which the needs of our varied regions and interests can be reconciled?

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SUN DANCES, CORN POLLEN, & THE CROSS

NATIVE AMERICAN CATHOLICS TODAY

CHRISTOPHER VECSEY

When Pope John Paul II visits the United States this fall, he will meet in Phoenix on September 14 with thousands of Catholic American Indian delegates at the annual Tekakwitha Conference. These representatives from Indian communities across the country are some of the 300,000 or more Indians in the U.S. who identify themselves as Catholics. Their dual identity — as Indians and as Catholics — has long posed conflict for them and their ancestors; however, in the past decade (partially through the efforts of the Tekakwitha Conference) they have forged special forms of religiousness that have eased old tensions and have led to spiritual renewal.

These American Indian Catholics derive their Catholic heritage from the work of missions over four centuries. Spanish missions in the Southwest from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries brought Catholicism to Papagos, Pimas, Yaquis, various Indians in California, and Pueblo Indians of Arizona and New Mexico. French missions in the Northeast left their impact on Mohawk and various Algonkian speakers — Abenakis, Micmacs, Ojibwas, and others — in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the nineteenth century, European agencies revivified and established missions in the U.S., particularly across the Plains, Plateau, and Western regions, later to be joined by American-born missioners. The Sioux, Arapaho, Blackfeet, Choctaw, Flathead and other Indians received their Catholic training in the nineteenth century. Jesuits, Franciscans, Benedictines, Oblates, and many other orders of priests and sisters were aided by the founding of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions in 1874, and by the Commission for Catholic Missions among the Colored People and Indians in 1884, both still in existence. Today over $1 million is appropriated for Indian missions from collections made the first Sunday of Lent in every diocese in the country. These funds reach missions and parishes where Indians are in greatest evidence: Gallup, Santa Fe, Phoenix, Oklahoma City, Fargo — dioceses with Indian Catholic populations over 220,000 each — Rapid City, St. Paul-Minneapolis, Seattle, Syracuse, Yakima, Bismarck, as far off as Anchorage, and elsewhere across America.

This fall's conference is named after Kateri Tekakwitha, born of a Christian Algonkian mother and Mohawk father in what is now Auriesville, New York, in 1656. She was baptized in 1676 and, because of Mohawk opposition to her conversion, moved to a village of Christian Indians — now Caughnawaga, south of Montreal. She took a vow of perpetual virginity and, in the short life she lived as a Christian, distinguished herself by her intense self- abnegation and holiness. She died in 1680, but the record of her devotion was kept alive for over two centuries, until the Jesuits forwarded a petition for her canonization to the Third Plenary Council of U.S. bishops meeting in Baltimore in 1884. Since that time pilgrims have journeyed to her shrine in Auriesville, as well as to her grave. The American

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hierarchy formally presented her name to the Vatican for consideration, and in 1943 Pope Pius XII declared her venerable; she received beatification in 1980. Some Catholics — both Indian and non-Indian, American and Canadian — expect her to be canonized in the near future.

In Kateri Tekakwitha's name, and many say through her intercession, Indian Catholicism has experienced a resurgence. "Tekakwitha" means gathering, putting things in order. And that is what Blessed Kateri is doing today, according to Sister Kateri Mitchell, S.S.A., a Mohawk from the St. Regis reservation that straddles the St. Lawrence River, inspiring Indian Catholicism through her spiritual power. Msgr. Paul Lenz, Director of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, says that Tekakwitha is producing the "miracle" of Catholic Indian religious devotion today, especially through the Tekakwitha Conference.

Begun in 1939 as a support group for priests and brothers working as missionaries among Indian communities in the northern U.S., the Conference sponsored annual meetings in Fargo at which a few dozen religious compared their common work. Only in 1972 were women invited to attend, and only in 1977 did the meetings begin to take on the character and substance they have today. Rather than serving as an agency for missionaries, the Tekakwitha Conference became a means by which Indian Catholics can revitalize their faith. In 1977 Fr. Gilbert Hemauer, O.F.M. Cap., and his associates — Sr. Genevieve Cuny, O.S.F., and Francis Hairychin, both Sioux — initiated a critical evaluation of the church's relationship to Native Americans. They organized Kateri Prayer Circles in many Indian communities to promote spiritual growth through the explicit evocation of Tekakwitha. They planned a provocative annual meeting for 1978, at which fifty Indians spoke, to the 150 missionaries, of native anger toward the church. The Indians called for greater Indian content to Catholic Indian liturgy, and for more social activism within the church in regard to Indian causes. At the following year's meeting, Indians expressed dismay at their sense of being second-class members of the church and evicted most of the non-Indians in order to hold private caucuses. A small revolution was under way.

As a result, the Tekakwitha Conference became a year-round organization to establish youth programs, a nationwide newsletter; an organization to make Indian concerns known to the American and Vatican Catholic hierarchy. Annual meetings since 1980 have grown to 3,000 participants, mostly Indians, whose goal is to embody the Gospel in native life. In 1986 the annual conference included numerous prayer services, Masses, Cursillo meetings, regional caucuses, pan-Indian cultural sharing, personal testimonies, feasts, a powwow, and a great deal of informal visiting. There were special sessions regarding teenage Indian concerns, alcoholism, and liturgical innovations, and among the thousands of Indians were dozens of bishops and other religious showing their support. The 1987 meeting in Phoenix should prove even larger, with the pope as a focus of interest.

The Tekakwitha Conference has a non-Indian executive director, Fr. Hemauer; in 1986 an Ojibwa priest, Fr. John Hascall, O.F.M. Cap., was named president. Fr. Hemauer offers his resignation every year, so that Indians may run the Conference. So far his resignation has never been accepted by the board of directors, consisting presently of ten members: lay and religious, men and women, Indians and Whites. In the words of one priest, the Tekakwitha Conference has become "an organization that is beginning to take on the characteristics of a movement...that promises to alter the face of the Roman Catholic church among the Amer-indian people."

This transformation reflects the development of Catholic missionary theology growing out of the Second Vatican Council; it is a response to Indian needs and demands and to critiques of Christian missions to Native Americans.

One prominent critic was Sioux Indian Vine Deloria, Jr., who, in *Custer Died for Your Sins* (1969), laid the following charges at the church's door: that missions were chief agents of destroying Indian cultures, producing a spiritual malaise among many Native Americans; that missionary dogmatism, authoritarianism, and condemnation of traditional culture destroyed autonomous Indian spirituality; that missions treated Indians as incompetents who could not lead their own communities, much less take positions of leadership within the church. No wonder, Deloria argued, that non-Christian Indians resisted and resented missionaries, and even Christian Indians bridled under foreign control of the area of their lives that should be the most autonomous: their relation to the holy. Deloria and other critics noted that most Indians who were considered Catholic were only "nominal" in their faith. Most commonly they ignored the sacraments and lacked a "Catholic culture" that was indigenous and genuine. In some Indian communities, militant Indians organized native schools and worship services designed to pull Indians from the church and toward an autonomous "Indian Religion" based on aboriginal models. With a weak hold on Indian loyalty, the church witnessed large numbers of "lapsed" Indian members.

Church authorities said that the Roman Catholic institutional framework can no longer be considered coterminous with the true church of Christ, that there is spiritual validity to religious traditions beyond Christianity. Since a person's culture is the basis for his or her identity and personhood, there must be greater respect for non-Christian forms of spirituality, personal conscience, and non-Western cultural expressions within the church.

In particular, Vatican II brought about a new attitude toward American Indians, both Catholic and non-Catholic, an attitude ably summarized by a 1977 *Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on American Indians*, but provided in greater depth by the writings and activities of Carl Starkloff and Paul Steinmetz, both Jesuits. The 1977 *Statement* affirms that Catholicism's authenticity requires respect for "distinctive traditions, customs, institutions, and ways of life of its peoples." It states that "the Gospel message must take root and grow within each culture and each community." The *Statement*

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calls for greater Indian leadership — clerical, religious, and lay — within the church, and it charges those who work with Indians to promote social justice for those whose community and personal lives have been damaged by U.S. national policies. There is a balance in the *Statement* between those bishops who felt that the proper role of the church is to proclaim the Gospel, and those who wanted to emphasize the social mission of the church.

In keeping with the spirit of Vatican II, church authorities have asked forgiveness from Indian Catholics for past wrongs: a history of paternalism, cultural invasion, harshly judgmental condemnations of Indian traditions. In this spirit, missionaries have engaged Indian medicine men in lengthy and candid dialogues. For example, on the Rosebud Sioux reservation in South Dakota, Catholic and Sioux religious leaders met regularly between 1973 and 1979 to air their attitudes, compare their traditions, and search for their common values and goals. In his recent book *The Pipe and Christ*, William Stolzman, S.J., records that the medicine men expressed "anger against the church for...suppression of traditional religion for so many years," but the dialogues produced a respectful, mutual understanding.

Indian religious traditions needed to be seen as genuine forms of spirituality, comparable to Christian forms. In his 1974 book, *People of the Center*, Carl Starkloff — for many years a missionary at St. Stephen's Mission in Wyoming among the Arapaho — compared Indian and Christian expressions of religiousness — their devotion to a Supreme Being, their "idea of sin as disharmony with God, self, and the world," their ethic of self-sacrifice, and their beliefs regarding life after death. He posited that Indian and Christian religions are both genuine, both historically syncretistic, neither absolute.

A deliberate mission policy developed to "indigenize" Catholic beliefs and practices among American Indians, specifically: to incorporate traditional Indian liturgical forms — dances, designs, costumes, words — both verbal and non-verbal prayers, including chants, the smoking of tobacco in sacred pipes — as "para-liturgical" modes of Catholic worship. "There seems to be no reason why such rites as the sun dance, pipe covering, and sweat lodge, as practiced by the Arapaho, should not be considered as possible 'para-liturgy,' and even as cultural settings, for Christian worship for Indians who so choose," Fr. Starkloff says. A Zuni artist painted murals of the traditional kachinas along the nave of St. Anthony's church in Zuni. In Syracuse, "para- liturgical celebrations" were held at St. Lucy's parish, where the local Iroquois Catholics could realize that they can be Indians and Christians at the same time. Such accommodations to Indian cultural and religious forms were not unknown before Vatican II; however, they have proliferated since then.

The most famous of mission inculturationists has been Fr. Paul Steinmetz, who in the early 1960s helped decorate the Pine Ridge Sioux church — Holy Rosary Mission at the Red Cloud Indian School — with a peace pipe, eagle feathers, thunderbirds, horses, the sun, moon, and an "Indian Jesus," with the Sioux words, "Wakan Wakan Wakan" (Holy, Holy, Holy) on the altar cloth. Steinmetz responded to a request from Sioux sun dancers to say Mass following the piercing ceremony. Years later, the same Sioux invited Steinmetz to pray with the sacred pipe during the sun dance. He reasoned that since his Catholic congregation and the sun dancers were the same people, he should not separate worship into two arbitrary realms. As a result, he came to use the pipe at Mass. At Mass he told the Sioux legend of the coming of the pipe, and he served as spiritual advisor to young Sioux men making vision quests "to discover themselves and some purpose in their lives."

Steinmetz, Starkloff, and the other missionaries who have actively joined Indian and Catholic modes of worship have been attempting to "inculturate" Christianity, to bring about "the incarnation of Christian life and the Christian message" in an Indian cultural context, using the symbols of Indian religious culture as a means to focus attention on the Gospel, in order, ultimately, to transform that culture into a Christian one, without its ceasing to be Indian. Thus, they regard traditional Indian religions as "pre-Christian," preparing Indians for Christianity. Steinmetz has told the Sioux that "their sacred pipe is a foreshadowing of Christ...the eternal and living Pipe."

One can find this message in the weekly radio sermons, "Sioux for Christ," broadcast in the Dakotas: "the old time Indians were really seeking for Christ." And in Ron Zeilinger's 1984 *Lakota Life*, published by St. Joseph's Indian School in South Dakota, "Jesus was the great dancer suspended from the Tree of Cross. He was a warrior pierced on behalf of the people — that we might live!" Like the buffalo, he died so that humans could live. He became our food, a "true 'relative' making life possible for all."

As missionaries have promoted the incorporation of Indian culture to Catholic liturgy, they have also demonstrated an "ecclesiastical populism," viewing themselves as helpers and servers in implementing the vision of Indian congregations and in promoting and affirming Indian leadership. Rather than

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presenting Indians with a prepackaged, European model of religious life, missionaries are prompting Indians to create indigenous institutions that support and serve them where they are. "If the story of Jesus and the Catholic way are to take flesh in each culture," says Fr. Hemauer "the native people themselves must be the storytellers and catechists." Fr. John Mittelstadt, O.F.M., of St. Michael's mission in Navajo country says he looks forward to the day when Indians will be spreading the faith among non-Indian communities.

To further this end various dioceses have established special centers for Indian ministry, such as the Sioux Spiritual Center in Plainsview, South Dakota, which trains deacons, catechists, religious, and priests. In placing these spiritual training grounds in areas close to Indian communities, the church is trying to make the institutions more palatable to potential leaders who do not want to leave their extended families. The first Indian deacon was a Sioux, the late Steven Levi Red Elk, ordained in 1975 at Holy Rosary Mission at Pine Ridge, South Dakota. Today there are over three dozen Catholic Indian deacons.

In the past there was often Catholic resistance to the notion of native religious and clergy. Indians were sometimes accused of being "too near nature to live a supernatural life," and there are records of White Catholics who prevented Indian vocations through threats of violence. The first Indian priest in the U.S. — the Delaware, James Chrysostom Bouchard, S.J. — was ordained in 1855, and there have been at least three orders of sisters whose membership has been wholly or primarily Indian (including the extant Oblate Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament); however, the pattern for most ordained Indians has been to submerge their identity in non-Indian communities. Fr. Bouchard distanced himself from his Indian childhood, at least in public, and although he preferred to serve as a minister to his own tribe, he accepted the orders he received for a life of "exile" from Kansas in the far western frontier among non-Indians. The tumultuous Ojibwa Philip B. Gordon accepted less graciously a life apart from his Indian community. Other Indian priests have commented that they "experienced more discrimination in the seminary" than outside it.

In order to coordinate and encourage Indian Catholic leaders, Br. Lorenzo Martin, O.F.M. (now married), and Sr. Gloria Davis, S.B.S., organized the National Association of Native Religious (NANR) in 1971. Today it has over a hundred members in the U.S., including deacons, religious, priests, and one bishop, under the coordination of Sr. Genevieve Cuny, a fourth-generation Sioux Catholic. Vocations among Indians are still small — about twenty priests, fifty sisters, ten brothers in the U.S. — partially because of the strictures of celibacy (a concept still antithetical to Indian values placed on procreation and family identity) and partially because of Indian resistance to the notion of hierarchical leadership. Nevertheless, there is a growing Indian Catholic leadership, promoted by the church.

The highest ranking and most visible Indian cleric in the church today is Bishop Donald E. Pelotte, S.S.S., who in May 1986 was named coadjutor bishop of the Gallup Diocese. Born in 1945 in Maine of an Abenaki father and French Canadian mother, he entered the seminary at age fourteen, was influenced by the Catholic Worker movement, and earned a Ph.D. in Theology from Fordham University, writing his dissertation — later published — on John Courtney Murray. He is the first American Indian bishop in the U.S.

Indian Catholics regard his consecration a historic event, a chance for Indians to "build our own church." Some Indians have commented that Pelotte's experience has been mostly in the non-Indian world, and that as bishop he will have to "start at the beginning," learning how to "run the door," as one Indian put it (meaning that to become a sweat lodge leader, one must first perform the helping tasks: opening and closing the door flaps). Nevertheless, his reception among Indian communities has been enthusiastic.

On reservations and in urban areas, Catholic ministries run programs to help Indians beset by poor housing, unemployment, and alcoholism. Church agencies concern themselves with battered Indian women, school dropouts, addicts, prostitutes, and youths who have attempted suicide. The church still conducts schools on many reservations, although there has been a move toward greater Indian control of these institutions. In addition, Ted Zuern, S.J., writes a monthly column, "Bread and Freedom...Justice and Faith" in the newsletter of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, which draws attention to issues concerning Indians nationwide. Zuern and other church spokespersons are pointedly critical of U.S. Indian policies, for instance the threatened relocation of Navajos from Big Mountain in an area jointly held by Hopis and Navajos. Church officials lobby in Washington on behalf of Indian interests.

In the church's attitude of respect, in its liturgical syncretism, in its promotion of Indian leadership, and its agenda for social reform, there has been an attempt to give new life to Catholic American Indian spirituality. The new policies have not been lost on the Native Americans. As Johny Arlee, a Flathead spiritual leader, said in a speech at the 1986 Tekakwitha Conference, "It's a different church nowadays."

These changes are not without critics. Fr. Francis Paul Prucha, S.J., — a prominent historian of U.S. Indian policy — decries the "hokum" of religious relativism illustrated by attempts to cojoin Indian and Christian systems. If traditional Indians' spirituality is so noble, he asks, why Christianize it? He wonders if Catholic missionaries aren't losing confidence in Christianity's uniquely important religious dimensions.

On the other hand, non-Christian Indians and scholars find the claim of Catholic missionaries, that Christianity represents the fulfillment of native spirituality, to be an arrogant and manipulative ploy to seduce Indians from their traditions. Native religious practitioners complain that Catholic missioners have no right to appropriate traditional stories or implements to suit Christian purposes.

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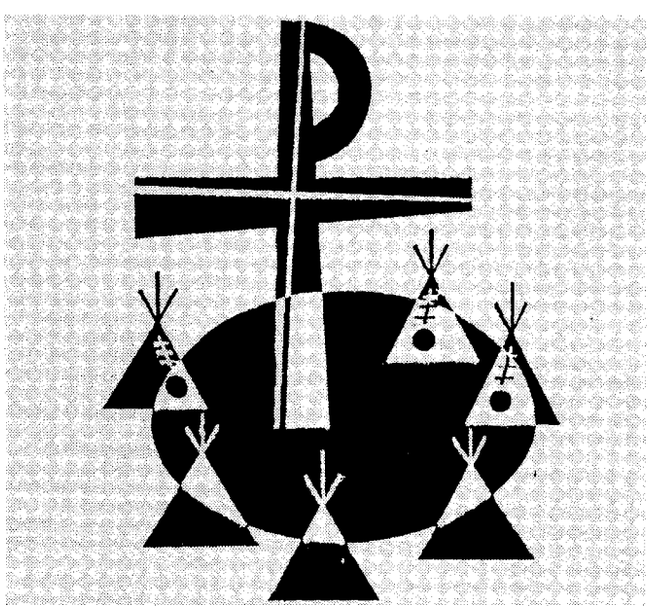
A third criticism, sometimes leveled by social scientists, argues that missionaries have not only romanticized traditional Indian spirituality, but have tried to revive customs that were moribund, thus fashioning a pastiche of pseudo-Indian traits that have little grounding in current Indian cultures. Some conservative Catholic Indians are "scandalized" by missionary attempts to revive pagan forms of worship. One anthropologist calls this "another instance of do-gooding white paternalism," that picks out quaint and unthreatening aspects of Indian cultures that have lost their dynamic otherness; ignores or explains away features of Indian culture unsavory to Christian tastes; and encourages outdated, dysfunctional elements to persist.

Despite these and other criticisms, new church policies have drawn many Indians into closer identification with Catholicism, while promoting a contemporary Indian identity. Fr. Michael Galvan, an Ohlone whose ancestors were converted by the California mission system, tells how his grandmother always thought that when she went to church, she ceased to be an Indian. When church was over, she'd come home and become an Indian again. When he went to the seminary at age fourteen, she asked him, "Are you going to stop being who you are?" This conflict of identities is no longer a problem for him in a church whose message is: "If we stop being who we are, we cannot be Catholic." In such an atmosphere, Galvan says, Indians are in the process of finding, rather than losing, their identity in the church.

For some Indian communities tribal identity is expressed through Catholicism. Witness the pageants performed by the Flatheads — dramatic myths that tell how the tribe learned about Christianity and sought repeatedly a means of bringing missionaries among them — or the Iroquois pageants that recall the life of Blessed Kateri.

Still other Indians are able to transcend their *particular* tribal background through identification with Catholicism. Burton Pretty On Top, a Crow, says that the Crows, Cheyennes, and Sioux used to fight among themselves, "but we're Christian now. We're one.... This is our family." This is not to say that he ceases to be a Crow; nor does Sr. Kateri Mitchell lessen her identification with her Mohawk relatives when she leads "intertribal sharing" ceremonies at the Tekakwitha Conference. Rather, Indians have a long history of shared spiritual and material contact, and pan-tribal contacts are to Mitchell, "the most completely spiritual, God-centered, and Christ-oriented."



At the annual Tekakwitha meetings — perhaps the largest gatherings of Indians in North America today — Indians arrive in tribal units, but they socialize and worship across tribal lines, while deepening their Catholic religiousness.

Can Indians authentically practice both Indian and Catholic forms of religiousness without real, felt conflicts and contradictions, without hypocrisy? Indians have accommodated, adopted, and adapted to Catholicism in a variety of ways, and there have been diverse responses to liberalized Catholic mission policies.

Some Indians — both Catholic and non-Catholic — continue to regard traditional and Christian religious forms as incompatible, either in whole or in part. Some of these Catholic Indians left their tribal practices behind long ago. Others are pagans who regard Christianity as inimical to Indian life. Still other Catholic Indians respect their native faith, but think it should be kept separate from their Catholicism. Don Goodwin, an Ojibwa Catholic deacon, says, "I don't think there will be a day when my religious belief will ever fit totally into the Catholic religion.... I do not believe that all our traditions can be put into the church." At the 1986 Tekakwitha Conference there was talk of a Sioux deacon who had recently decided that Indian and Christian religious ways are in opposition and should not be joined. Some Catholic leaders, both Indian and White, hoped to dissuade him from his conviction.

On the other hand, many Indians express the idea that there is no real difference between native and Christian religions; both worship the same God, they say, only in slightly different forms. Even among Indian Catholics who regard Christianity as a tradition qualitatively superior to native forms, there exists a tendency to blur the distinctions between Indian and Catholic religions. Sr. Kateri Mitchell suggests that Indians expressing love in their own religions are Christian in fact: "If they love..., well, what is the greatest command?"

The pattern most common among Indian Catholics is the syncretizing of native and Catholic forms of religiousness; however, the modes of syncretism vary widely. There are some medicine men among the Sioux, for instance, whose native religiousness is suffused with Christian elements; nevertheless, they maintain a sharp distinction between their Sioux and Catholic religious practices. They may also be members of the peyotist Native American Church, and thus the conclusion is drawn that they "maintain three or four distinct and separate religions simultaneously...," in the words of one scholar. In different situations, at different times of their lives,

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they may call upon Catholic or native forms of worship, to serve particular ends. This kind of compartmentalization of religious participation has deep roots in Indian cultures, in which different "medicine societies" might have influence over various aspects of personal, seasonal, or communal existence. It is possible in a contemporary Indian community — for example, a historically Catholic pueblo like Taos in New Mexico — for Catholicism to function as one of numerous kiva societies: a valid, important, but compartmentalized tradition of religious knowledge. In Indian communities a number of different forms of religious discourse may exist; thus, an Indian can "speak" the language of Catholicism, or peyotism, or the kiva, each in an appropriate setting.

On the feast days of saints, on holydays of obligation, on Sundays, Pueblo Indians celebrate their Catholicism. At important rites of passage — baptisms, marriages, funerals — Catholic rituals are perceived as the proper religious tools; the Catholic "medicine bundle" is opened and used. But on weekdays the Pueblo churches are locked and Catholicism presents a low profile.

If one observes the Pueblo celebration of holydays in the Christian calendar, a range of syncretisic patterns emerges. At San Ildefonso in New Mexico, for instance, the feast day of the patron saint is observed every January 23 by the performance of Deer-Buffalo and Comanche dances in the village plazas and kivas. Dancers imitating wild animals, and others dressed as Comanches, are welcomed into the pueblo, as are Anglo tourists who are treated with hospitality. The dances last the day; however, at 9:00 A.M., a Mass is said in the church, to the side of the central plaza. Following Mass, the dancers visit the "campo sancto," the plaza in front of the church, where the visiting Catholic priest receives their greeting. Then they return to the main plaza and the priests depart. In such a ritual setting, Catholicism functions as a foreign but accepted institution that is greeted, granted respect, and treated as a complement to native identity. The balance differs markedly from the Mass said at the 1986 Tekakwitha Conference, where pipe ceremonies, pageants, and processions surrounded the core, Catholic event. Among the Pueblos, Mass is rarely the central focus of religious life, even though Pueblo Indians are by and large devoted to Catholicism. The same can be said of Yaqui Indians in Arizona, performing Holy Week rituals that feature penitential displays along with dramatic enactments of ancient, Christianized struggles between the cosmic forces of good and evel. As in Mexico and many parts of Latin America, a "folk Catholicism" persists among Indians of the Southwest that permits Catholic worship to complement, alternate, and integrate with traditional religious forms.

Among creative theologians — like the late Sioux holyman and Catholic catechist Black Elk — the two faiths become one embodied life of spiritual practice. In the Northeast the Abenakis and Micmacs long ago combined their ancient religion into Catholic worship. Dick West, a Southern Cheyenne, paints "An Indian Jesus," that presents Christ's life in Indian imagery (the Last Supper in a tipi). Fr. John Hascall, an Ojibwa medicine man and priest performs "healing Masses" in Indian communities. When reporters see his medicine bag filled with tobacco, sage, eagle feathers; when they hear him speak of his "spirit helpers" and his Crane Clan "medicine lodge"; when he thanks the thunderbirds or offers a sacred pipe at retreats, they ask: "How can you be a medicine man and priest at the same time?" He replies, "That's your problem, not mine." His cojoining of Ojibwa, pan-Indian, and Catholic religious forms and theology seems genuine, natural, and secure, and receives the support of his colleagues and superiors.

With the encouragement of church authorities, and with the example of Indian Catholics like Hascall, it may be more difficult to keep Indian and Catholic modes of worship separate, and with time there may be less impetus to do so. Ben Black Elk — the famous Black Elk's son — has said that he used to keep his Catholic and Sioux ritual lives separate, for fear that he would be unfaithful to Christianity; but now that the church "has brought the two together into one life,... peace is in my heart."

Sr. Gloria Ann Davis, a Navajo-Choctaw, recalls her Navajo grandfather's gentle reverence toward nature, his respect for all things. She says that from him "I got a real appreciation of God, our Creator." He taught her the foundation of a religious life: a reverential attitude. Her father was a peyote leader, and she went to prayer meetings with him, as well as to Mass on Sundays. At the peyote meetings she "learned spontaneous prayer" in an "ecumenical" setting, the kind of prayer she finds today at Catholic charismatic services. Today, as a Catholic, she practices the religious life she learned as an Indian child from her Indian relatives. As a result, she remarks, "The church would be placing before us a terrible block if it denied us the right to continue to treasure what was taught by our ancestors."

Nevertheless, many Indians today worship with virtually no reference to their Indianness, often in parishes either apart from other Indians, or integrated with non-Indian worshippers. In the past, Indians tended to drop out of parishes where they were overwhelmed by white presence; however, in many cities (e.g., at "Tri-Cultural Celebrations of the Liturgy," with Hispanics and Anglos, in Santa Fe) Indian and non-Indian Catholics share community religious life. One North Dakota bishop comments, "There seems to be a growing desire on the part of our Native Americans and our white people to worship together," a development he finds a "benefit...to both races."

When Indian Catholics meet Pope John Paul II in Phoenix, they will find a pontiff who has supported the policies of missionary accommodation to non-Western cultures. His central message to Indians in Canada was that "Catholicism can be synthesized with native traditions"; that "the Gospel, far from destroying their traditional values and customs, has the power to purify and uplift the cultural heritage which they have received."

In the United States, where the pope is presently at odds

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with mainstream, liberal Catholics, there is little expectation of confrontation with Catholic Indians. If anything, Indians are perceived as faithful in respect to the magisterium, loyal to the Vatican, not apt to question publicly the papal teachings regarding sexual ethics or abortion. Indian Catholics do not always eschew socio-political controversy; the Ojibwa Catholic Lawrence Cloud-Morgan, now serving an eight-year prison term for his role in damaging a nuclear warhead in 1984, spoke of "carrying two spirits with him" — Indian and Catholic — in his Plowshares activity. Nevertheless, for all the leeway Indian Catholics have in their theological and liturgical expressions, they are seen as devoted, pious Catholics.

There are "rumblings" in the native communities, however, against the possible beatification of Fr. Junipero Serra, the founder of the Spanish mission system in California. Indian Catholics have lobbied against Serra's elevation, citing the "coercive, authoritarian" missions he established. The Tekakwitha Conference newsletter has printed articles that charge the California missionaries with imprisoning, flogging, starving, and working to death thousands of Indians over the decades in which they functioned. Although Serra himself remains free of these charges, his elevation during the papal visit could create a stir.

It is around Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha that Indian Catholics have rallied in their spiritual resurgence, not around missionaries of the past. Indians who profess their longing to greet the pope in Phoenix, or who leave corn pollen offerings before statues of Tekakwitha in their churches, can also point to the places where, in past centuries, their ancestors suffered under mission servitude or murdered priests during desperate revolts. Fr. Hemauer hopes that the pope will "avoid embarrassment" in promoting Serra; nevertheless, it is doubtful that even an altercation over this issue will damage the development of Catholic Indian spirituality.

Indeed, some suggest that this dual spirituality, this Indian-Catholic religiousness, may have the effect of creating a fuller, more distinctly American Catholicism. A sister of Iroquois extraction reminds us of something Thomas Merton once said, that all American religiousness will be alien, ill-at-ease, until it incorporates the spirit of Native Americans.

PRAGUE & THE PERILS OF JAZZ

WHEN SPONTANEITY GOES ON TRIAL

KENNETH ROTH

It seemed at first a patent blunder for the Czechoslovak authorities to direct their first major political trial of the decade against a group of jazz enthusiasts. The recent trial of five leaders of the Jazz Section — which I attended on behalf of Helsinki Watch, the New York-based human rights group — was sure to provoke Western outrage at the persecution of such innocuous cultural activity. In a clever move, however, the Czechoslovak government used the trial to portray a reformist façade. The contradictions revealed by the trial reflect the deep ambivalence within official circles in Prague about how to respond to the movement for reform led by Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev.

Inaugurated in 1971 as a branch of the officially approved Czechoslovak Union of Musicians, the Jazz Section began as a small group of citizens interested in listening to and promoting jazz. Like other official clubs, the Jazz Section was permitted to publish a newsletter and an occasional pamphlet for distribution among its members without the need to submit to formal censorship. For several years, Jazz Section members used this privilege sparingly, listening to and writing about the likes of Thelonius Monk and Charlie Parker. The authorities were content to have the musical energies of their youth channelled in such an apparently apolitical direction and away from the perceived dangers of rock-and-roll.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, however, the Jazz Section began to expand dramatically. Featuring a publication devoid of newspeak and led by its fiery chairman, Karel Srp, the Section grew from a small, dedicated core to a substantial movement of 7,000 — far larger, for example, than Charter 77, the well-known opposition group, which has never attracted more than 1,500 signatories. The readership of the Jazz Section newsletter also skyrocketed to an estimated 70,000, making it the most widely read uncensored publication in the country. At the same time, Jazz Section publications began to explore artistic and cultural subjects well outside the field of jazz, by issuing such banned works as novelist Bohumil Hrabel's *I Served the King of England* and poet Jaroslav Seifert's speech accepting *in absentia* the Nobel Prize for Literature. Moreover, to protect themselves from official reprisals, Jazz Section leaders sought international attention they secured membership in the International Jazz Federation

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a branch of the Music Department of UNESCO, and traveled to Budapest to plead their cause before the Helsinki follow-up Forum on European Culture.

Throughout this period, however, the Jazz Section carefully avoided enmeshing itself in dissident politics, keeping its distance from leading opposition organizations such as Charter 77 and VONS (the Committee to Defend the Unjustly Prosecuted). Nonetheless, plagued by memories of the Prague Spring of 1968, when a flourish of political and artistic pluralism was dealt a crushing blow by the "fraternal assistance" of Soviet-led troops, the aging and deeply conservative Czechoslovak Communist leadership became alarmed at the energy and enthusiasm of the small cultural renaissance represented by the Jazz Section.

Thus began a series of official steps to limit the Jazz Section membership, regulate its concerts, and restrict its publishing activities to the original jazz-oriented purpose of the club. Officials from the Ministry of Culture began visiting printing shops to discourage the publication of Jazz Section materials. Auditoriums that has been used for Jazz Section concerts became suddenly and indefinitely booked. The Union of Musicians was pressured to dissolve this troublesome jazz wing, and, when the union resisted, the Interior Ministry itself banned not only the Jazz Section but also the entire union.

Rather than accept dissolution, however, as had various reformist organizations such as the Writers' Union and the Scientific Union after the Soviet-led invasion of 1968, Srp and his cohorts resisted. Spurred on by Josef Prusa, its stubbornly independent lawyer, the Jazz Section appealed the banning decision in the courts, despite the lack of legal precedent for judicial review of an Interior Ministry decision. Prusa then advised the Jazz Section leadership that it need not heed the banning order until appellate review had been completed. Srp and company willingly accepted this advice and, in an unprecedented step, continued their activities as usual.

The basis for Prusa's appeal was compellingly simple. Accustomed to ruling by decree, the Interior Ministry had banned the Jazz Section without deigning to explain its action. In lawyerly fashion, Prusa contended that the lack of a reason frustrated any challenge to the ruling because there was no rationale to attack. Accordingly, Prusa maintained, the banning order had no force.

Needless to say, the Czechoslovak courts failed to appreciate this argument. Both the Prague Municipal Court and the Czechoslovak Supreme Court rejected the appeal summarily, again without so much as a word of explanation. Prusa then appealed to the Czechoslovak constitutional court, which exists in the law books but has never been established in fact. Not surprisingly, that appeal was never answered.

Parallel to these legal efforts, the Jazz Section wrote letters — on 130 occasions, by Srp's count — to the Interior and Cultural Ministries seeking a reason for the banning. Predictably, no explanation was proffered.

Unamused by this resistance to its banning order, the Interior Ministry took ever more draconian measures. In September 1985, the police searched the homes of Srp, Vladimir Kouril, the deputy chairman of the Jazz Section, and Josef Skalnik, its secretary and graphic designer. The authorities also openly commenced a criminal investigation of the Jazz Section leadership, summoning over a thousand witnesses, mostly Jazz Section members. Finally, in September 1986, the police arrested and jailed five leaders of the Jazz Section — Srp, Kouril, Skalnick, Cestmir Hunat, and Tomas Krivanek — together with the Section's landlord and its accountant.

Such seeming resolve, an evident victory for hardliners in the government, was soon replaced by official equivocation. The trial was repeatedly scheduled and postponed. All but Srp and Kouril were released from jail. Observers began wondering whether the trial would ever take place, as Communist party moderates seemed to be gaining the upper hand.

Fueling this sense of dissension behind party doors was an increasingly public debate between Lubomir Strougal, the Czechoslovak prime minister, and Vasil Bilak, the party's chief of ideology. With the seventy-four-year-old party leader Gustav Husak fading into the background in seeming contemplation of retirement, Strougal and Bilak had become the principal advocates for competing positions on how to respond to Gorbachev's reform policy, known as *glasnost*. Strougal had embraced Gorbachev's program, even using the word "reform," with its evocation of the Prague Spring, rather than the preferred Czechoslovak term "revolutionary change." Bilak, on the other hand, had urged that, because of the "special circumstances" in Czechoslovakia — a reference to the kind of pent-up pluralist yearnings that had triggered the 1968 invasion — Soviet innovations should be applied cautiously. This official conflict exerted parallel contradictory influences on the fate of the Jazz Section defendants.

Thus, in a show of resolve, the authorities finally set the trial for last March 10. In an unprecedented liberal move, however, they invited three foreign journalists — from Reuters, Agence France-Presse, and the Voice of America — to attend the trial and observe all proceedings. But the authorities could not bring themselves to sponsor a genuinely public trial. To justify excluding additional observers, they selected a tiny courtroom within Prague's vast principal courthouse and apparently even removed one of the four benches usually in place for spectators.

However, with another nod to Gorbachev, the authorities refrained from relegating the remaining observers to the street — not a small concession in light of the Siberian winds that linger in Prague in early March. Rather, the two-hundred-odd would-be observers in attendance — other foreign journalists, human-rights activists, jazz enthusiasts, political sympathizers, and Western diplomats — were permitted to stand in the corridor outside the courtroom, and even to clap and cheer as the defendants entered or exited the courtroom. This was a far cry from, for example, the VONS trial in 1979, when on the

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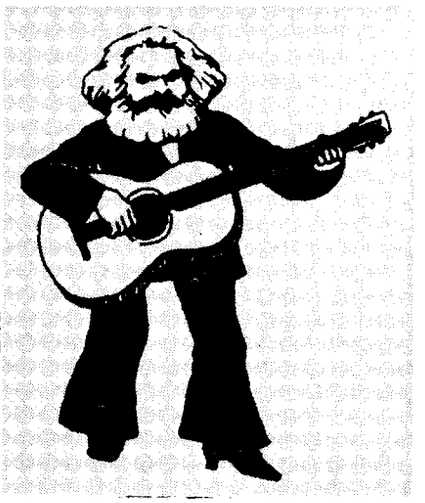
first day of trial thirty sympathizers were arrested and hustled off to jail. But then, lest those present feel too welcome, the authorities ostentatiously videotaped everyone present, an implicit threat of future reprisals.

The conduct of the trial revealed a similar confusion on the part of the authorities. The judge selected to preside over the trial, Vladimir Striborik, was an apparent moderate, having granted suspended sentences in five lesser political cases in 1986. Similarly, the prosecutor, Petr Snajdr, was a man of integrity who ordinarily handled straightforward apolitical crimes. Both men maintained a courteous and professional air throughout the trial.

Despite their respectful demeanor, however, the judge and prosecutor largely prevented the defendants from presenting their principal defense. The defendants' main contention at the trial was that they lacked unlawful intent because they had relied on Prusa's advice that the banning order was invalid until the government responded to their appeals for a reason. While each defendant was permitted to advance this argument personally, the main advocate of the position — Prusa himself — was never permitted to enter the courtroom. Pacing anxiously outside, Prusa said that he would have accepted full responsibility for the Jazz Section's defiance of the banning order: "My friends knew nothing about the law. They trusted me. By not calling me, the authorities are breaking the rules that they must prove guilt or innocence in a full and complete fashion. They are not concerned with truth but with politics."

The charges against the Jazz Section reflected a similar calculated balance. The Czechoslovak Penal Code is well stocked with expansive political crimes — such as "subversion" or "incitement" — that are broad enough to embrace virtually any opposition activity. However, perhaps because of the difficulty of proving that a group of jazz enthusiasts represented a significant political threat, the authorities charged them with the superficially apolitical crime of engaging in an "unauthorized business enterprise."

To the surprise of many Western observers, the Jazz Section defendants never used the trial to attack this apolitical façade. Nor, for that matter, did they challenge the government's right to license and restrict such activities as publishing books and organizing concerts. Instead, the defendants adhered to Prusa's legalistic approach by condemning the failure to provide reasons for the banning decision. Although this less confrontational approach minimized the risk of long prison terms, it also permitted the trial to focus on the technicalities of business regulation rather than the spontaneous cultural activity that in fact had spawned the prosecution. Outside the courtroom, Vaclav Havel, the renowned playwright and essayist, observed: "The Jazz Section represents a model of behavior that is dangerous for a centralized power. If everyone acted as they did it would be the end of the totalitarian system." Inside the courtroom, however, this political insight gave way to haggling over accounting records and appellate procedure.



Nonetheless, the authorities were unable to reject out of hand the defendants' argument that reasons should have been given for the banning decision. Jaroslav Niklas, a prosecution witness from the Ministry of Culture, tried to turn the tables by attributing the lack of explanation to the defendants' failure to comply with the elaborate procedures for "liquidating" their organization. In a Kafkaesque exchange, Srp demanded, "Why did the Liquidation Committee not answer the letters we were sending?" "We could not answer letters from an organization that did not exist," the Ministry official replied. "Would you have met with me" Srp implored. Oblivious to the contradiction, the official retorted: "If you had consented to liquidation, of course we could have met."

Since guilty verdicts seemed inevitable regardless of which government faction prevailed, the sole suspense concerned the length of the sentences to be imposed. The prosecutor argued that the defendants had knowingly violated a valid order and that it was irrelevant whether they had agreed with its dictates. "Even in the most civilized societies," he argued, "you cannot conduct such activities . . . when they are not authorized." He concluded by recommending prison terms of from two to four years for all defendants.

In response, Srp described the Jazz Section as a "human and cultural organization" with apolitical goals. He noted: "We never challenged the leading role of the Party. We always abided closely by the regulations. We never advocated terrorism or fascism." The bulk of Srp's argument was devoted to the lack of reasons given for the banning decision. When pressed by the prosecutor about the outright defiance of the banning order, he explained: "It was an intuitive, spontaneous decision. We could hardly believe in the 1980s there could be anyone who would want to ban jazz music." Finally, in the closest he ever came to challenging the substance of the banning order, Srp made veiled reference to the fundamental freedoms that Czechoslovakia had endorsed as a signatory to the Helsinki Final Act: "It was not our intention to violate the laws of this country, not even those signed in 1975 in Helsinki."

Other Jazz Section defendants did not go even this far in challenging the government's right to ban cultural organizations.

For example, in a reflection of the naive spontaneity that seemed to lie behind the actions of many Jazz Section members, Kouril simply stated, "I feel not guilty . . . None of us joined the Jazz Section to become unofficial."

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In an extraordinary opinion and verdict, the judge praised the defendants for their cultural work but made clear that, even in the era of *glasnost,* spontaneous activity is not tolerated in Czechoslovakia:

> We considered that the defendants took their activities seriously. They were experts in their professions. I've read articles by Mr. Kouril and I've seen the artwork of Mr. Skalnik. I don't know if I understand this work but its quality was high. The defendants' cultural work was commendable, but it requires a legal framework because social value must be regulated.

With this reaffirmation of cultural orthodoxy, the judge imposed a sixteen-month prison term on Srp and a ten-month prison term on Kouril, although both received credit for the six months already spent in jail awaiting trial. Skalnik, Hunat, and Krivanek received suspended prison terms and were placed on probation.

In the corridor outside, the supporters reacted to the verdicts with outrage, bemoaning the demise of the Jazz Section, at least in its above-ground incarnation. In the only visible use of force during the trial, a handcuffed Srp and Kouril, resisting slightly, were pulled through the chanting crowd by four uniformed escorts.

But, almost in spite of themselves, some supporters admitted to relief — even jubilance. The sentences were far more lenient than the maximum eight-year prison terms that could have been imposed. A remark by Father Vaclav Maly, an opposition priest whose license to practice has been revoked, reflected the prevailing mood: "*Only* sixteen months. I know it's a lot. But *only* sixteen months."

The victory of the Gorbachevian faction is by no means assured, however. Concurrently with the Jazz Section trial, the government showed a less tolerant side in a series of less visible prosecutions of political offenders. As Father Maly observed, "the Jazz Section was a special case because it attracted the attention of the international press."

Thus, only the week before, in a case that attracted no attention at the time, an appellate court in Prague upheld a three-year prison term for Ervin Motl, who had been singled out for the heinous crimes of publicly listening to the Voice of America, maintaining contacts with Czechoslovak émigrés, and discussing poor working conditions with his fellow workers. The prosecutor in the case evoked memories of the 1950s by accusing Motl of being a "class enemy."

Similarly, in the coming weeks, Jan Dus, a Protestant pastor, will stand trial for slander, with a possible three- to ten-year prison term, for writing an open letter to Husak accusing the police of using a search of his apartment as a pretext to frame an opposition cohort; Pavel Wonka, imprisoned for ten months while awaiting trial, faces charges of running as an independent candidate in the May 1986 parliamentary election; Frantisek Adamek, a Catholic priest, is awaiting appellate review of his two-year prison term for distributing samizdat literature; and, in a case of extreme concern to Czechoslovak opposition figures, Petr Pospichal, a charismatic young activist from Brno, faces prosecution for his work on behalf of Charter 77 and VONS, including distributing underground literature, corresponding with émigré circles, and, most serious, maintaining contacts with Solidarity figures in Poland.

In these circumstances, it remains too early to say whether the Jazz Section trial is trend-setting or anomalous. The authorities' relatively lenient approach to the trial permits hope for a more tolerant and open future. But the very fact of the prosecution, coupled with parallel signs of a crackdown on dissent in all forms, signals the resilience of more orthodox elements.

That Westerners now even discuss the possibility of an opening in Czechoslovakia demonstrates the shrewdness of the authorities' approach to the Jazz Section trial. By exploiting the attention drawn to the prospect of jailing jazz enthusiasts, the Czechoslovak authorities snatched fortune from folly by creating a forum for the display of their new-found liberality. Whether this "reformist trend" is real or mere window-dressing should be judged by whether the relatively unknown targets of ongoing and future prosecutions reap the benefits of what so far is only a moment of partial tolerance. Only time, and continued Western attention, will tell.

SCREEN

OH, SO MUCH VIOLENCE

'THE UNTOUCHABLES'

An evil film, *The Untouchables*. A red carpet of earnest advance hoopla has been rolled out for it by the hip devotees who still regard its director, Brian De Palma, as a Great Rebel. De Palma also got large financial backing from Paramount, which sees this movie as a neo-*Godfather* and as the studio's "quality" film entry for the summer market.

To make *The Untouchables*, De Palma has employed dramatist David Mamet (*The Verdict*) for the screenplay; composer Ennio Morricone (*The Mission*) for the score; fashion eminence Georgio Armani for costume; and Oscar-winner Patrizia von Brandenstein (*Amadeus*) for visual design. Robert De Niro plays Al Capone and Sean Connery plays one of the few "good cops" willing to take him on. Fewer gods were assembled at Olympus.

And what does De Palma get from it? Schlock. Bloody schlock. At times, to be sure, it's exquisite-looking schlock, with the production team's talents in ample evidence. The first scene, for example, promises much: De Niro, about to be shaved, lounges in the chair of a gorgeous private barbershop. De Palma shoots from above, looking down on the lavishly

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parqueted floor, the barber, some reporters, and De Niro holding court. Technically the camera angle is termed a God's-eye view, but De Palma will have none of its moral implications. He's more interested in the predictable razor cut the barber accidentally inflicts, raising the first of many dire De Niro "don't-mess-with-me" looks. The barber only makes a little cut, but the scene sets a sanguinary tone. The mayhem that follows is distinguished not by its moral implications (as in *Platoon*), or by drollery (as with Hitchcock), but by visual pyrotechnics alone.

Much is not original. The problem is not basing the film on the old TV series, but the open plagiarism of other films, with a knowing wink from the knowledgeable director at his also in-the-know fans. For his second scene, De Palma steals a child and a bomb straight from Hitchcock's *Sabotage* (1936). Such a scene is good because it works dramatically and suspensefully in its own context (which this one doesn't), not because it evokes another movie or declares what a filmmaker knows. De Palma's allusiveness is based on the essential modernist substitution of wit for judgment, of ideas for intelligence, and of sophomoric showing-off for a genuine sense of tradition.

Compare, for example, De Palma's abuse of tradition with Oliver Stone's evocation of American Gothic in the jungles of *Platoon*. That film takes us inside the minds of his soldiers—helping us empathize even with the insane among them—because it recreates the feel, the texture, the experience of being alone in an unknown wilderness, among enemies of another race, and of being frightened almost out of one's soul. Stone's achievement stands in a line from Hawthorne to John Ford's classic Westerns, especially the terrifying opening of *The Searchers*. Stone doesn't underline the parallel; he may not even have thought of it. What he felt and translated to film was the emotional reality of actual life that alone gives the conventions and traditions of art their merit.

Gangster films also define the weakness of *The Untouchables*. In *The Godfather* Francis Coppola performed the miracle of providing understanding, and even weird respect, for some of the Mafia; he used his visual resources, even his bloody action sequences, to get inside the characters. De Palma grants his characters little or no interiority; they are stock, comic-book figures, with the actors themselves either chosen for or infected with De Palma's penchant for open plagiarism.

The main "untouchable," federal agent Eliot Ness, is played by Kevin Costner, chosen for his clean-cut, straight-jawed likeness to Robert Stack of the television series. One of his staff is played by an Al Pacino look-alike (Andy Garcia), presumably for both light irony (remember *The Godfather*, folks, as well as De Palma's own remake of *Scarface* with Pacino) and dark atmosphere. De Niro adds his own extended plagiarism, with campily amusing imitations of Rod Steiger from the film *Al Capone* (1959). To be sure, De Niro spills more blood than Steiger: in the old days, even film gangsters had clean hands. In De Palma's film, those with queasy stomachs should beware of an after-dinner speech where De Niro uses a baseball bat to punctuate a management principle. Indeed, the whole sanguinary tone of *The Untouchables* is a xerox of *Scarface*, De Palma's 1982 atrocity about Miami-based Cuban mobsters.

Connery is good in some early scenes, the only ones in which De Palma allows some character to show. An elderly Irish cop still walking the beat, Connery first meets Costner on a downtown Chicago bridge at night; the two spar, eventually become friends, and form a team, with Connery in the fatherly role of tough-guy adviser. The pairing at first shows promise, but both actors are hampered by a cops-and-robbers script that even has them riding around as cowboys stopping liquor imports at the Canadian border. Connery's talent (so much bigger than his James Bond roles) can't redeem De Palma's penchant for reductive carnage.

The one actor equal to his part is Billy Drago as Capone's punk hit man, Frank Nitti, only because he finds a way of acting low enough for the film's one-dimensional level. Drago (chosen for his name?) projects slick, menacing evil, all the better because of his sparkly white suits. De Palma, however, never establishes him clearly as Capone's main enforcer. He is too shadowy a figure in his early bits in the film to acquire real power. But then De Palma has little interest in *studying* evil.

This moral flatness also marks the cloying, saccharine presentation of good in the film, especially in Costner and his family. One of the hardest artistic challenges is to make good interesting, but De Palma doesn't even try. He may not even suspect. He seems to think a happy home is all angelic sweetness and light, blond children and adoring womenfolk (such as Patricia Clarkson as Costner's wife). No wonder he finds domesticity boring—so much so that he even drops the plot thread of Mafia threats to kill Costner's family. The issue just disappears.

At some moments, visceral emotional reactions govern one's response to *The Untouchables*. We want Costner (and Connery, especially Connery) to win and De Niro to lose; we are hooked, albeit on a comic-book level, into moral involvement. We are also being had. De Palma is the Cecil B. De Mille of cinematic violence. Like De Mille's delight in pagan sexuality in his biblical epics, De Palma's style seems to say, "Look how terrible this violence is. Now, let's take another look. And after that, another." Near the end, Costner clears his desk and sighs, "So much violence." He almost sounds sad to see it go—or is it De Palma whom I heard speaking? The line is either a sick joke or one of the more galling cases of crocodile tears in film history.

All De Palma's faults come together in the worst scene in the movie, perhaps the most disgustingly manipulative scene in any recent film. The overeducated will term it homage to Eisenstein; in fact, it's a retread of the famous "Odessa steps" sequence in *Potemkin*, no better for being obvious. Of course, it's filled with visual pyrotechnics, complete with the requisite baby carriage prop, wild shooting on stairs, laborious slow motion, blood everywhere, and a soupçon of brains on a wall

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for dessert. To what end? To show us style, to demonstrate flair, and, to hide behind the sentimentality of the baby carriage, De Palma's actual divorce of art and content, technique and moral concern. The scene is fascist pornography: flashy violence for its own sake. It has all of Eisenstein's letter, and none of his spirit.

The scene also provides a key to understanding the pathetic psychopathology of the father-son theme in this and other De Palma films. The scene isn't about promoting justice or protecting children. It's about directing, specifically about being a director worthy of comparison to a great director in the past, a cinematic father figure. In this respect, it parallels the father-son relation of Connery and Costner. In a key scene, "father" figure Connery tells "son" Costner that they are in "blood brotherhood" against Capone, a relationship that ends only in Connery's slaughter. De Palma defines his father-son teams by blood, literally saturating his script with it. Perhaps this is rooted in autobiography. De Palma's father, a doctor, used to take him to his surgery to watch operations. Now—from *Carrie* (1976) to *Dressed to Kill* (1980) to *Body Double* (1985)—De Palma the son all too eagerly takes us.

But would "father" Eisenstein bless such a childish corruption of inheritance?

TOM O'BRIEN

ART

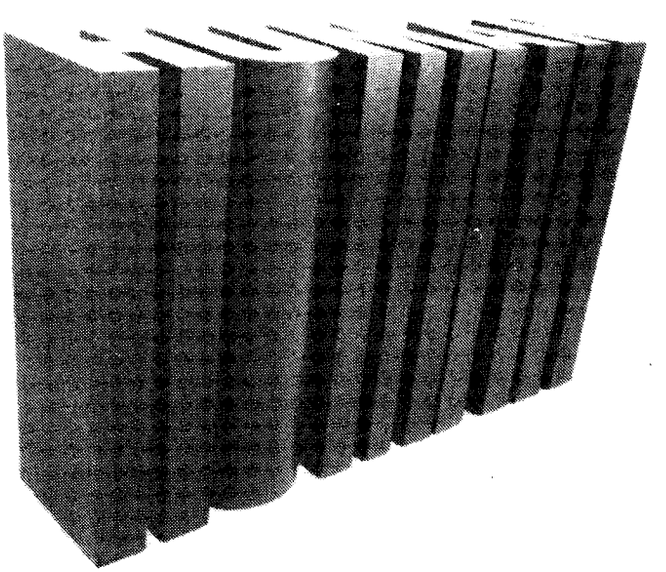
A PLEASANT WALK THROUGH
THE WHITNEY BIENNIAL

Compared with what it was only two years ago, the present Biennial Exhibition at the Whitney museum is a considerably chastened affair, a drastic curatorial recoil from the critical backlash that greeted the last exhibition, which was almost universally decried as the lowest point yet reached in the half-century in which the Whitney has staged its Biennials. These exhibitions, held every two years, consistently receive careful scrutiny since they represent a major museum's attempt to sum up definitively the present state of the American art world. This year several modifications have changed things for the better. Because there are now three curators instead of five, the chaotic diversity of the last show has been suppressed. In addition, the smaller number of art objects frees the present Biennial of the bargain-basement clutter of its predecessor.

If the quality and display of the show have improved, the general themes and contours of the world of contemporary art have remained essentially what they were. One impressive change, however, has been the virtual elimination of figurative art, to the extent that almost no straightforward example of it remains at the Biennial. This change was hardly to be expected. In the wake of the almost total dominion of abstraction through the sixties and the early seventies, the last decade had seen the increasing presence of four-square figurative art, almost to the exclusion of pure formalism. The reasons for this sudden renaissance in figurative art had been a dissatisfaction with the Park Avenue smugness that artists began to sense in the followers of Pollock and de Kooning. The figure was taken on with a new energy because abstraction could not be as allusive, political, and programmatic as the most recent generation of artists wanted it to be. But this general reorientation reached its apogee two Biennials ago and, if abstraction is making a comeback, it is in the non-figurative form of "literary" art which often rejects completely the quest for aesthetic consequence.

As for the strictly abstract painters, they are more abundantly represented, and more successful than they were last time, and also less afraid to assert their commitment to pure form. In three very successful paintings, Donald Sultan has created a rich interplay of massive black fields and bursts of lemon light, while Terry Winters, who was represented in the last exhibition, has repeated, a little less successfully, his podlike biomorphs of two years ago. Probably the two most successful abstract painters this time round are Stephen Mueller and Louise Fishman who have an appetite for the physical properties of paint, that has not been expressed so aggressively since the acme of Action Painting in the early fifties. Curiously, Willem de Kooning himself, is represented, and in comparison, his works appear little more than pleasant exercises, lacking robustness.

The figurative artists represented have little to recommend them. Their love of figuration rarely goes so far as to study the artistic rendering of forms in space, and they have not yet evolved an interestingly expressionistic compromise. In one room, Izhar Patkin has created a massive environment whose four walls are hidden beneath sheets of rubber pursed like an accordion, and covered with iridescent, crudely drawn images



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Robert Cooperman

The Empress of the Laundromat

To beat her is impossible:
with her three teeth, white hair,
and mushroom nose;
her skin like the hulls of ships
that have collected barnacles
for centuries at the bottom
of forgotten oceans.
Smiling and half crazy
she dumps my laundry,
less than half dry,
from its dryer
and replaces it with her rags
and ribbons, the skirts
and blouses she has worn
all her adult life, and longer.
When I shout at her
waving my arms like Napoleon,
or Marc Antony before Actium,
she smiles, cocks her head
and allows me to restore
my sheets and shorts
my towels and tee-shirts
into the heat to hatch clean.
But as soon as my back is turned
she is at it again,
dragging my rightful darlings out
replacing them with her changelings.
Like the cuckoo she is irresistible
and like the tamer birds, I give way.
She accepts my defeat with grace.
She smiles, waves me good-bye,
even opens the door for me.
I watch her take my seat,
open my paper and scan the tabloid —
upside-down, the news more strange
than usual.
If I wait one more instant
I'm afraid she will wink at me
and turn the pages right-side-up.

Hillel Schwartz

Fantasiestücke 3. Ann Landers Comes to Me for Advice

Not to worry, I will say, candling her confession
like a stale egg, Ann, dear, you are but one
of hundreds upon hundreds upside-down in a pound
cake, sweet, rich, and confused. I slice open
worse predicaments over my breakfast toast.
You'll see, I will tell her, how little outlandish,
how infinitely unadvisable your life has been.

Or I will say, all women are not Brothers
or doctors; life goes on without professions
of faith or fable. Listen, Ann, I too
want out of this business of wisdom.
Who do you think you are
to be entitled to an answer?

Or, again, perhaps I will take her to bed
like a new pair of pajamas from Penney's
and sleep warm and cheaply inside her
and wake with most everything sta-prest
and crisply ignorant of nightsoil.

Or I'll mention a certain sloppy someone
better at this sort of thing than I am,
and available Sundays, and soft-hearted
as special four-for-one bathtub soap.

Or — but she has come a-knocking already
and I'm in a tizzy, scrubbing the floors,
oiling the antiques. She knocks hard

like a deaf woman with a walnut cane
and I must see who's there, knock knock,

who's there? Ann. Ann who?

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of inner-city crime and violence. Here, as in so much recent figurative art, it is the idea, rather than the execution, that is the point of the exercise, and it is for this reason that Patkin's work is so unsatisfactory. The same could be said for David Bates, whose slightly more conventional portraits of fishermen and the like do not succeed in being either attractive or interesting. The vernal landscapes of Robert Greene, however, have a willowiness like Gainsborough's, and the mythological figures that people them constitute a success of a minor sort.

But the majority of the works displayed at the Biennial are either a compromise between the figurative and the abstract, or else a third thing which is so far removed from any aspirations to aesthetic validity, as to call into question their status as art. One whole group of artists, for example, have incorporated words into their paintings and graphics. Barbara Krueger, who was present in the last Biennial, has a superb sense of graphic design, in which she features a massive monkey head or a hand holding out a credit card upon which she places challenging slogans, usually referring snidely to the politics of the art market. One work by Richard Prince consists of a series of non-descript photographs of clouds, on which are superimposed, for no apparent reason, one-liners from the Borscht circuit, which are funny, as far as that goes, but reflect no credit upon the artist. Nancy Dwyer also jumps on the verbal bandwagon, and in imitation of the snazzy graphics of television (a pervasive influence at the Whitney) she implants upon a varied field of blue the words "coming up next." The point of this, and other such exertions, is a kind of knowing, disengaged, unarticulated rejection of popular culture; but such art offers no better substitute, and only rarely does it rise above the most puerile snideness.

In this show, as in the previous one, homo-erotic themes were present, with perverse blatancy in the photographs of Bruce Weber and the paintings of Mcdermott and Mcgough. Then there were gimmicky works of art with basketballs in water, metal sculptures made to look like balloons, massive blowups of manuscripts covered with neon lights, and disembodied talking-heads projected onto the granite walls of the museum. Some recent artists who have appeared in previous Biennials are Julian Schnabel, who must be included by virtue of his being indisputably representative if not gifted, Judy Pfaff, whose pleasing sculptural fandangos lack their past energies, and Ed Ruscha, who seems never to change.

The 1987 Biennial is surely a better production than its predecessor. It is more pleasant to walk through, and the art works repay a closer inspection. The downplay of the most vanguardist elements has led to the elimination of most of the environmental art of the last show, and this is probably to be regretted. But the larger question posed by the undeniable improvement of the Whitney's most recent Biennial is whether it has improved enough. The art, even at its best, does not at any point rise above the pleasing into the ranks of the memorable, let alone the great. One gets the feeling, after becoming acquainted with these Biennials, that when great art does emerge, it will come from some quarter now unknown to the art world.

JAMES GARDNER

James Gardner writes on the arts for Commentary, New Criterion, *and* The New Leader.

BOOKS

The roar & the silence

PERSIAN NIGHTS
Diane Johnson
Alfred A. Knopf, $17.95, 348 pp.

Robert Jones

In our age of glorified self-determination, the idea of a cosmic jokester whimsically yanking our puppet strings seems a throwback to the days of Mount Olympus. We possess the power to make our own lives. There is a sense in which this trumpeted credo of responsibility has turned us into such monsters of self-regard that even the hands of heaven seem tied. Questions of fate, destiny, or contingency pale before the tyranny of the individual validating his or her life against whatever odds society places before it.

In the modern mind's celebration of the isolate self, the world loses its impact, and along with it, the ideas that form its intellectual and moral base. It is always the "I" that is foremost, and the usual modern drama consists of the thwarted self staking its claim to an experience it feels it has been denied. In the feminist novel, the homosexual novel, the novel of black experience, the heterosexual novel of betrayal in the suburbs, the self remains the subject, no matter what the narrative tells us secondarily about society. And in these tales, what is often mistaken for concern about the world is really concern with ideology. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with this, of course, except that in depicting political injustice through art, the world can too easily be divided into black and white, and so lose track of the ambiguousness that is its truer nature.

Think for a moment of books like *A Passage to India* or *Daisy Miller* or *Portrait of a Lady*. What is memorable about Miss Quested, Daisy Miller, or Isabel Archer is how each character ventures into the world and learns about the irrevocability of human carelessness and error. The broader context of the life they lead matters, much more so than the life

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itself, because there is an indication in these novels of a world surviving after the characters have left the scene, of lived history and of change.

It is understanding of a world independent to the self that seems absent from many of the books we read now. Near the beginning of Diane Johnson's new novel, *Persian Nights*, Chloe Fowler finds herself a victim of the American arrogance that assumes every place is another version of our own backyard:

> Of course she had not really believed Iran would be a foreign land. She saw the deficiency in her imagination....her imagination had provided her with no more than a benign region of camels, and mosques, and well-run hospitals of the American kind....This is real, she thought with a shiver. I am not at home here.

Johnson brings us into Iran immediately before the fall of the Shah. But in the best tradition of novels about the voyage out, *Persian Nights* creates a world that dwarfs its characters with its richness and detail. And it shows us how in the disruption of the familiar, we learn the most about ourselves when we are the farthest from home.

That the universe is palpably, visibly hostile is a given in Diane Johnson's novels. We feel the entire structure of the universe at work: how the heavens, society (most often represented by the police), and one's friends and family conspire against the individual. Experience is a kind of crapshoot in which we hope to avoid the attention of cosmic forces. When the narrator in Johnson's *The Shadow Knows* (Knopf, 1974) confides that someone is about to murder her, her best friend demurs, suggesting that she is "inferring from the normal malignancy of things some flattering personal attention."

In Johnson's last three novels, the narrative begins with the threat of something calamitous about to happen: the terrified, possibly paranoid, narrator waiting to be attacked in *The Shadow Knows*; the terrorist hiding underground and fearing recognition in *Lying Low* (Knopf, 1978); the revolution about to erupt in *Persian Nights*. This feeling of living on the edge creates an atmosphere of suspicion in which Johnson raises questions about identity and the fear of exposure. Who are we? How are we known? How does the private self belong to the name we are called by the world? In the desire to know and be known, paranoia and understanding unfold into each other. Existence is split between the desire to shield ourselves from view and yet establish a lasting identity against the anonymity that causes each of us to vanish.

> *Chloe feels faint, the heat, the horror of these flies. It is her duty to prevent them. She has the notion, brief and incomplete, that this is as much as she ever could do, and that she will not have another chance, ever, to be heroic, never to be in an open lifeboat, never lost leading others to safety, never to be called up in any way except now.*
>
> —*Diane Johnson*
> Persian Nights

Johnson is fascinated with the way documents identify us within society. Marybeth, the terrorist in *Lying Low*, learns in her life underground that with enough money to purchase a fake i.d., a social security card, and a driver's license, she can literally buy a new self. Yet Ouida, the maid in her house, lacks a passport and fears deportation because she cannot prove her existence to the authorities. In each case, not only is their mobility determined by a piece of paper, but so, too, is the very self that is known to the world.

But how completely can that self ever be known? Johnson is obsessed with the separation between our public and private personae. At the end of *Lying Low*, the woman who owns the house where the others live is taken hostage and fears dying anonymously. She says her name out loud, "Theodora Wait," because that is all she has to establish her difference from her captors, to prove that she has led a life. But it means nothing to them. She thinks, "How sad that everyone should turn out to be strangers; whom does she know? Who knows her? How hollow, how brittle is the living self, so like the shell of a locust, about to shatter, with nothing inside."

In describing the fragility of personality, Johnson doesn't mean to imply the obvious idea that our public identity is irrelevant, or even secondary, to the central core of the self. Romantic ideas about the private heart of the individual become sentimental in an age of police states and political betrayal. How we are known, and by what means, matters greatly. The Iranian wives in *Persian Nights* lack the green stamp on their passports that indicates their husbands permit them to travel. Without it, they are prisoners of the state. But when Chloe Fowler lends her passport to one of them, the woman is instantly transformed into "an American," someone with different freedoms and the ability to escape.

We are dependent on the world for our identity. Johnson goes so far as to suggest that the private self can wither without the external evidence that makes us visible to others. Alone our identity is an amorphous collection of thoughts, memories, and desires that promise to slip away as if none of it ever existed.

In *Persian Nights*, the Iranian husband of an American is arrested in the middle of the night. Uncertain if he will ever return, his wife considers returning to Detroit. "If she went back to America, all her years here, her pretty rooms, her speaking Farsi, none of this would matter; it would be as if she hadn't lived at all." Think how it is when you try to explain an event that changed you to a stranger. Language and description seem at their emptiest. Experience constantly conspires to lose us in forgetfulness. To prove that we have been here is the only way we separate illusion and fantasy from what is real. Birth certificates, marriage licenses, death certificates, photographs, the rituals of everyday life, are like flags waved from a sea of drowning people.

And so armed with only a passport and a knowledge of Sassanian pottery, Chloe Fowler makes her entrance to Iran in *Persian Nights*. She had planned to accompany her husband, Jeffrey, on an exchange program of American doctors at an Iranian hospital. But an emergency

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keeps him at home and Chloe travels to Shiraz alone.

Johnson assembles a rather alarming collection of Americans for her story, from Chloe's lover, Hugh Monroe; to her husband's colleague, Dick Rothblatt and his lover, Junie; to Dick and Sugar Dunham from Chapel Hill. These idiots abroad live in the hospital compound with Abbas Mowlavi, a handsome widower; Noosheen, the young, beautiful bride of an elderly doctor; and the sneering head of the hospital, Dir. Farmani.

As Chloe mingles with her compatriots, the plot of *Persian Nights* assumes an almost nineteenth-century complexity. Can Chloe keep her affair with Hugh Monroe secret? Can Dick Rothblatt similarly hide his affair with Junie? Will Jeffrey ever arrive in Iran? Will Chloe and he divorce? Will Noosheen escape her withered husband's embraces and marry Abbas? Does Abbas want her? Does he want Chloe? Junie?

Within the characters' feeble attempts to disguise their adulterous behavior, Johnson suggests more sinister secrets. Who among the Americans is CIA? How did Hugh have shirts pressed at the Tehran Hilton when he claims he has never been there? Who among the Iranians is Savak? Who is betraying whom to their respective authorities? Who is the dead man in the cave? Johnson's genius for social comedy is so assured as she piles layers of romance and intrigue upon the more menacing questions of political treachery, that it seems as if Jane Austen might have returned to take notes among the Persians.

It is Chloe, intermittently wise, frequently irritating, opinionated, and superficial, who sustains the labyrinthine plot. She is one of the most cloying, and memorable, heroines in recent fiction. Chloe responds to Iran with a lack of self-consciousness we each share in our hearts. When she visits a sacred mosque, Chloe thinks of harems, pistachio nuts, and making love among the veils. When her lover, Hugh Monroe, confesses his secret visit to the Shah, of all the details she most wants to know is what the Empress was wearing. She speaks too loudly and too often. But so do we all.

In an essay about Charlotte Brontë, Johnson rejects the feminist interpretation that views the plainness and passivity of Brontë's heroines as the yearings of female masochism. She suggests instead that it is a measure of Brontë's artistic daring to "risk heroines so deviant as to be plain." I think Johnson intends a similar strategy with Chloe Fowler. Instead of a noble creature with impeccable instincts, or instead of the usual victim, Johnson gives us a woman as muddled as most ordinary mortals. What Chloe discovers about the world in Iran, she learns incompletely, but this is how each of us most truly meets experience. And the truth of what she sees, coming as it does in flashes of insight from a fussy, unremarkable brain, has the power of seeming lived, and not the product of an ideology or a dream.

Johnson's world is one in which people are no match for the cosmic and political forces that usually get the better of us. Yet despite these odds, Chloe wants what all of us want: to do something heroic, to make herself known against the impersonality of history. At the very least, she wants to be good.

During an excursion to Persepolis with her friends, Chloe gets her chance. Johnson brings the novel's threads of paranoia and uncertainty together in this episode as the tourists stumble upon soldiers looting ancient treasures. Chloe has no clue whom to trust — among the soldiers or among her friends — and yet she wants to make an impression against the screams and gunfire that surround her. So when she sees a soldier fall to the ground, she decides to save him, with no idea if he is a follower of the Shah, a defender of Persepolis, or a despoiler. He is simply a body in need of salvation.

Feeling virtuous, Chloe creeps from her hiding place and drags him to safety in the ladies room. She has chosen this act as her response to the tumult around her, and so she will not budge, even when she hears someone whisper, "Chloe, help me," from outside the door. The whisper soon disappears, and so does the soldier. He awakens to find himself held prisoner by a woman in a toilet and flees in Islamic horror.

The irony of each of Chloe's acts of bravery, of course, is that they make no difference. She gave Noosheen her passport without knowing the visa had been removed by an enemy, rendering it useless to the bearer. And in saving the soldier, Chloe ignores the cries of help and so may have consigned a friend to his death. At the novel's end, Chloe successfully rescues a mutt from a pack of strays and carries him home to America in a makeshift cage.

Ill-suited to acts of heroism and ignorant of the complexities of the world she is visiting, Chloe tries to be helpful and take a stand. In reducing Chloe's desire for heroism to the rescue of a puppy, Johnson does not cynically oppose the emptiness of human effort to the tremendous scope of the past. She merely suggests an awareness of proportion and degree.

While in Persepolis, Chloe looks over the city destroyed by Alexander the Great and thinks:

> That these streets had been full of living people walking along, hearts full, hearts pounding, should have struck her with its poignance, but she felt indifference. The pity of all this destruction should have struck her, rubble where magnificence had been. But it didn't make any difference...and it probably didn't make any difference if a bomb fell on, say, New York, beyond the immediate tragedy of death. What would be left anyhow in ten centuries? To lose Paris and San Francisco...made no difference to the universe, to history, to the bare ground that went on being.

Persian Nights evokes how we are each part of the world's transience. Johnson ends the novel with a magnificent description of the fall of Tehran, of Chloe and Hugh being swept away by mobs storming the American Embassy, of the excitement and certainty of change. And in the din of the shouts for the death of the Shah, we cannot help but think of the echoes of Alexander's soldiers marching towards Persepolis. *Persian Nights* tells us that all human action and desire falls somewhere between that roar and that silence.

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FROM BOREDOM TO TERROR

THE FIERY CROSS
THE KU KLUX KLAN IN AMERICA
Wyn Craig Wade
Simon and Schuster, $19.95, 526 pp.

Karen Sue Smith

Now, while the celebration of the U.S. Constitution inspires a "teaching moment" for citizens to take stock of their citizenship and to brush up on their American history, Wyn Craig Wade's chronicle of the Ku Klux Klan deserves to be widely read. For as glorious as the Constitution is in its statement of our freedoms, it is, of course, also limited, necessarily dependent upon government and upon the governed to enforce and enhance its decrees. Wade's thorough and timely book documents the few successes and persistent failures of both government and citizenry to protect the rights of all, particularly blacks in this case, against the violent machinations of the few. No genuine stock-taking would be complete without that.

To set the Reconstruction record straight, Wade traces the origins of the Klan to somewhere between December 1865 and 1866, prior to Radical Reconstruction, in Giles County, Tennessee, a state which had already ratified the Fourteenth Amendment. There, several bored young ex-Confederates banded together for "purely social reasons" and devised ghoulish costumes in order to play pranks about town. Quickly, however, the recently freed blacks became the butts of the group's nocturnal skulduggery (which would soon target carpetbaggers and scalawags as well).

The costumes became signs of the "ghosts of the Confederacy." And the whole cast of Halloween revelers — from the Grand Wizard at the top to Goblins, Dragons, the Exalted Cyclops (and later on the Kleagles) — became highly organized ideologues and skilled terrorists. White supremacy had timely appeal in a beleaguered South. As Klan membership grew, so did the numbers of men and women killed, maimed, and flogged by them: mainly "uppity blacks" — which might mean simply any blacks, literate, landholding, or voting blacks — and white sympathizers or teachers of blacks.

Rural black refugees swelled cities so that the federal government was forced to take action. But by then, President Grant, the Fifteenth Amendment, a series of Enforcement Acts, and federal troops were required to dissolve the Klan in South Carolina, and to discourage it in other states. Still, within three years, by 1874, a second Civil Rights Act was needed. It too failed significantly to change things, and during the Hayes administration, with obstacles to civil rights set up by the Supreme Court, segregation became lawful and Klan activity temporarily lulled.

The Klan's first real revival occurred during the postwar period under President Wilson, abetted by D.W. Griffith's controversial film *The Birth of a Nation*, which convinced white Americans, Wade writes, "of a past that had never been." Klansmen were presented as saviors of the Southern way of life; blacks as destroyers. It was during the latter part of this revival that President Harding had himself sworn into the Klan at the White House; J. Edgar Hoover, who figures frequently and ambiguously throughout the rest of the story, was a twenty-four-year-old employee for the Justice Department; and national Klan membership grew from its 1921 total of 100,000 to over one million members by 1922. With immigrants from Europe flooding into the country, and with the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, the Klan's targets expanded to include Catholics, Jews, all foreigners, and "Reds."

Wade chronicles with equal rigor the second revival of the Klan in the fifties, over school desegregation, and the most recent Klan revival in the seventies, over reverse discrimination, affirmative action, and busing. He devotes separate chapters to the making of the Griffith film, the relatively nonviolent but politically intimidating and pervasive Indiana Klan, and the appeal of the KKK to Christian fundamentalists, particularly ministers who were given free membership and dramatic "visitations" as the hooded Klansmen would interrupt their sermons to bring sizable donations and affirming notes.

Yet underlying the whole story are nagging questions, never explicitly asked by the author, but ably pressed onto the reader: Why was justice not meted out more regularly, given the presence of fair laws on the books of our judicial system? Is it necessary for democracy to be so fragile in the face of fascist groups within it? Does it really take executive assertiveness, Congressional legislation, the Justice Department, courageous citizens and citizen-groups, and infiltrators of the police, judiciary, and other law enforcement agencies — simultaneously — to rout out merely the legal impediments to racial equality?

In a one-volume history, it is difficult to miss the fact that the story, which begins with a presidential assassination and a union-wrenching fight for limited civil rights, closes, after a hundred years of struggle, with another wave of assassinations and a third Civil Rights Act...though not, at least, with another civil war.

Despite the tragic undercurrent, the story is full of colorful characters, is in parts uplifting, and is always told in bright language by an author skilled in thumbnail sketches and the memorable phrase.

Of Thomas Dixon, whose novel, *The*

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Clansman, formed the basis for Griffith's influential Klan film, Wade says: "A fiesty, acid-mouthed racist, Dixon electrified his flocks with forebodings of 'creeping negroidism' and the gospel of White Christian supremacy."

Indiana Grand Wizard David Curtis Stephenson is shown bluffing:

> Whenever a conference grew especially unsatisfactory, Steve pressed a concealed button making his hotline ring and talked over it in a strangely subdued fashion. Right before hanging up, he'd say, "Thank you sir; and please give my regards to Mrs. Coolidge as well."

Stetson Kennedy, one of the most memorable figures cut in the story, is said to have been "gifted with an imperturbable face" — a handy quality for a man to have whose ingenious undercover infiltration of the Klan furnished Drew Pearson's radio program "Minutes of the Klan's Last Meeting," and episodes of "Superman" with authentic Klan dialogue, plans, and codes, and who is credited with singlehandedly preventing a post- World War II rise of the Klan.

Senate Minority Leader Everett Dirksen is called "the hoary Illinois Senator with a wrinkled relief map of a face."

Wade demonstrates particular objectivity in his treatment of North and South — explicit references illustrate that racial bigotry is no respecter of regions. And in his treatment of Griffith's cinematic representation of Reconstruction — as influential as it was erroneous — Wade defends Griffith, to a degree, by explaining that his version was based on history books, albeit wrongheaded ones. When Federal District Judge William A. Cox rules out the applicability of the Ku Klux Law, thereby crippling the prosecution of the Klan for murdering three young voter education volunteers, Wade comments that, though Cox was a well known segregationist, his 1965 interpretation was based on a previous Supreme Court ruling rather than on his personal prejudice. Wade even hints at the role women played in various Klans, though he does not develop it.

Happily, history itself sprinkles ironies throughout its narrative, which Wade seizes to lighten up the saga. For example, the Klan's national Imperial palace was sold to the Atlanta-Savannah Roman Catholic diocese, where a cathedral was built and the Wizard invited to the opening ceremonies and Mass. It didn't happen until 1965, but it was bound to happen someday: under the mail-in registration policy of the Klan, a black man joined and was mistakenly appointed Grand Titan of Idaho before he was discovered. Grand Wizard Bobby Shelton stunned his federal investigators by taking not only the Fifth Amendment (he had always said this act proved a Commie), but the Fourteenth as well, And the recently convicted Navy spy, John A. Walker, Jr., walks across the book's proscenium as a KKK recruiter.

The humanness of this chronicle reads at times like hero and villain stores in the Old Testament: the first Grand Wizard of the Invisible Empire, Nathan Bedford Forrest, loses control of his own hooligans and helplessly calls for the disbandment of the Ku Klux Klan. He is ignored. His successor, William Joseph Simmons is outsmarted by a subordinate and retires, for a cash settlement. Wade's description of Simmons' fall is pathetic, if it is not the just retribution of the worms over Jezebel: "the forgotten and frequently tipsy Wizard haunted the lobbies of second-rate hotels until his death in 1945."

Wade brings his narrative up to the present with a compelling analysis of what has changed since the civil rights struggle began, and just which groups are monitoring and standing vigil against any resurgence of the Klan. But it is the account in its entirety — and the illusive reasons why the Klan has persisted in adapting itself to successive eras, appealing to the worst instincts among us, a wide spectrum of men and women — that leaves one properly on guard.

LONG JOURNEY TO THE PRESENT

MEMOIRS AND MEMORIES

Gary MacEoin

Twenty-Third Publications, $9.95, 277 pp.

Joseph Cunneen

Gary MacEoin is a man who has achieved a world consciousness, an understanding of Christianity large enough to include everything that he has lived through in an amazingly diversified and productive life. His eighteenth book, *Memoirs and Memories*, a deceptively mild title for his account of how he came to his present convictions, helps us see what it is like to be a genuinely free man in church and society.

Internationally known as one of the premier Catholic journalists of our time — John Cogley called MacEoin's account of Vatican II, *What Happened in Rome?*, the book on the Council *he* would like to have written — the author has also been a key agent of a changed North American consciousness in regard to Latin America, an area he has worked in and reported on for over forty years. What is most powerfully convincing in this present summing up of his intellectual and spiritual odyssey is the way he makes clear how gradually, reluctantly, he came to his fundamental conclusions that Latin America was left "with the sole option of some kind of socialist society," and that "the United States was using all means at its disposal to prevent the necessary changes, providing the military equipment and training to maintain order without justice."

MacEoin has traveled a long way from the tiny village of twenty houses in the west of Ireland where he grew up, but his memoir shows that he is still drawing on the strength and openness of his parents

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and the imaginative richness of everyday life in Sligo. The British controlled the class-ridden educational system and clericalism was pervasive, but his father encouraged diversified reading. His mother was acquainted with leaders of the nationalist revival; young people saw themselves as active participants in the struggle for Irish independence. In later life Mac Eoin could draw on his own experience to identify with those who were hungry all over the globe.

A superior student, MacEoin entered a Redemptorist seminary at an early age and spent many years preparing for the priesthood; three weeks before the date fixed for ordination he was told by his Provincial that he would not be recommended to the bishop for ordination and would have to leave the order. MacEoin's account of his seminary years and of his Kafkaesque struggle with ecclesiastical authorities — he was never given a reason for the action taken against him — was the subject of an earlier book, *Nothing is Quite Enough* (1958), which ought to be reprinted in paperback and made required reading for seminarians and their superiors. What comes through in his much briefer evocation of this experience here is the Christian maturity with which he responded to the injustice that had been done him. Although understandably bitter at the way the decision had been implemented, he did not destroy his spirit with anger, but determined to achieve independence from all powerful institutions in the future.

Although his religious superiors forced him to leave the seminary virtually penniless and without the degree that would have opened up employment possibilities in economically depressed Ireland, MacEoin managed to gain an advanced degree in Spanish, pass the bar, and establish himself as an editorial writer on the leading Irish daily in amazingly short order. He admits that his goal at the time was to achieve the worldly success for which his talents equipped him, since the religion he "had known, for all its highsounding rhetoric, had absorbed the values of the capitalist society in which it had functioned for several centuries." Nevertheless, he took his wife and four-year-old son to the Caribbean in 1944 to accept the position as editor of a struggling daily newspaper in Trinidad. It was a key decision, since it was there that his views on world order began to be formed. The lessons in colonialism, racism, and class structure that he learned there were simply sharpened and deepened by decades of painful experience.

Perhaps the reason why MacEoin can present his present convictions so firmly yet so mildly is that he came to them over a long period of time. Unlike some younger Catholics who leaped from a doctrinaire scholasticism to a romantic — and equally doctrinaire — Marxism, his positions have been hard-earned, thoroughly considered, carefully nuanced. *Memoirs and Memories* makes clear to what degree he shared the temporary wave of optimism regarding Latin America when President Kennedy announced the Alliance for Progress, the important clarification of his theological orientation brought about by his involvement with the *periti* during the heady days in Rome at the Second Vatican Council, and the significance of a round-the-world trip he took to see for himself that the planned structural oppression of Latin America was equally present on other continents.

Gary MacEoin has written a powerfully prophetic book, full of insight for those seeking to read "the signs of the times" for church and society at the end of our century. The reader's only regret is that the author's life has been so full — from the International Catholic Press Union to his work for the Sanctuary movement, from public relations for the Colombian coffee- growers' association to his total assault on U.S. policy in Central America — that he can't do full justice to the rich experiences and complex intellectual development that leave him, at the age of seventy-seven, the representative we most need (and won't get) at the forthcoming Synod on the Laity. For the full story, we'll need several more volumes.

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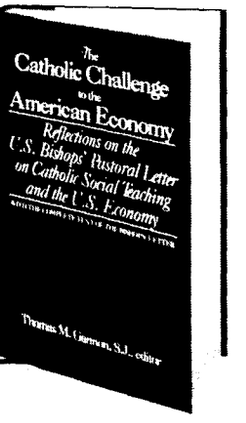
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IN BRIEF

NATURAL ACTS: A SIDELONG VIEW OF SCIENCE AND NATURE, *by David Quammen. Laurel Books (Dell), $6.95, 221 pp.*

This collection of essays on nature and natural history is among the best of its kind. Each piece is stylish and accessible to the general reader. Unlike the writings of more famous natural historians like Stephen Jay Gould, one does not have to pretend to understand or like them. They provide vibrant, exciting reading.

David Quammen writes in a style at once incisive and graceful, with a sure sense of the ring of English sentences and the value of stunning images. Often his essays begin with an anecdote that quickly delivers the *feel* of nature, or a provocative one-liner that drags a reader into the center of an issue. The essay "Desert Sanitaire" begins with a beautifully ironic evocation of T.E. Lawrence and his love for desert cleanliness. In "Rumors of a Snake," Quammen recounts his adventures looking for anaconda, offhandedly beginning with "What the world really needs is a good vicious sixty-foot-long Amazon snake." (When his guide finds one and plays with it, Quammen confesses, "My face bore the contemplative expression of two eggs sunnyside in a white Teflon skillet".) The essays are alive with both passion and humor, and a keen appreciation of nature's beauty and danger.

The essays are also highly informative. "A Deathly Chill" opens with a powerful synopsis of how some Boy Scouts managed to freeze themselves to death at Banff. It grows to provide a taut, economical account of one of nature's worst killers: hypothermia (recall the dead high-school campers last year in Oregon). Amazingly, Quammen recounts, it was hypothermia that killed most victims on the Titanic; lifejacketed, they jumped off the boat into a tranquil sea, only to freeze to death, not drown. Other essays contain similar oddities. Try especially "The Last Bison."

The author, who lives in Bozeman, Montana, first published these essays in outdoor magazines; Doubleday printed them in hardcover two years ago. In this third-life form, they deserve the wide audience which they are sure both to inform and delight. TOM O'BRIEN

THE CATHOLIC FACT BOOK, *by John Deedy. Thomas More Press, $23.95, 412 pp.*

For the highly mobile American Catholic family or interested observer, the fifteen hefty volumes of the 1967 edition of *The Catholic Encyclopedia* are a bit awkward to carry around. You will be glad to hear, then, that the encyclopedic John Deedy fulfills a crying need for a single, handy reference volume that almost fits into your pocket. Deedy has condensed nearly everything that might have slipped your mind (Quick: what are the corporal and spiritual works of mercy?) about the complex creed, cult, and code of Catholicism — its history (the papacy, Roman curia, ecumenical councils, heresies, schisms); basic tenets of belief and forms of worship (including sacraments, the rosary, Stations of the Cross, hallowed prayers); moral teachings (rules of marriage and divorce, a handy guide to major papal encyclicals with excerpts from several, the role of individual conscience, etc.); information on pilgrimage sites, cathedrals, museums, universities, religious and lay organizations (with addresses); and biographical sketches of saints and famous Catholics; and a useful glossary of code words that includes everything from angelism, *kulturkampf*, and Pauline privilege to weeping crosses. This is a book to browse in, and Deedy is a clear, sure guide through the labyrinth. D.T.

REVIEWERS

ROBERT JONES *works for a major publisher in New York City.*

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 338)

tion asserts that it takes its criteria for what can be done not only from its notion of man and woman's nature but also from its notion of their vocation. Vocation is a key idea in the document as it is in natural moral law. How so? It is because of this vocation that "marriage possesses specific goods and values in its union and in procreation which cannot be likened to those existing in lower forms of life." This means that something that could be done by following natural, biological processes is not to be done in humans — because of their vocation to share in God's work. "For this reason one cannot use means and follow methods which could be licit in the transmission of the life of plants and animals." This line of reasoning is certainly not relying on a "notion of biological nature," as the editorial states, but on a much fuller notion of the human person, who is touched "in the body and through the body," and who is also called "to share in a special way in his mystery of personal communion and in his work as Creator and Father." JERRY BRACKEN, C.P.

Quarrelsomeness now

Las Vegas, Nev.

To the Editors: The editorial, ["What Comes Naturally," March 27] is fascinating, confusing, and confused. But it does have a single word "quarrelsomeness" which it hopes not to be and would have been more forceful if it had been.

If Rome cannot honestly approach a question of faith and morals, and too often — here for example — the evidence shows it cannot, the time to be filled with quarrelsomeness is now. There is no longer room in our church for prelates who act and decree in secrecy. Throughout history the results of this type of action have been painful to the church, driving many away from the home that should be theirs, driving a wedge between man and his love of God.

You write, "Those who are dissatisfied with the Vatican 'Instruction' are under the obligation to develop an alter-

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native." Preposterous! Rather those who produce the "Instruction" are under an obligation to do so fairly, honestly, and in the open. Otherwise an "Instruction" becomes nothing more than a casual opinion. Have you forgotten that Archbishop James Hickey of Washington, a perfect example of our problem, is accurately quoted as saying, "There is no right [within the church] to public dissent"? And that does not take into account the inability of many even to begin to develop an alternative.

The Holy See exists to serve us. We do not exist to serve it. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger needs to be reminded he cannot manage his office as summarily as some of his predecessors did. Too many of us today are educated beyond that time. He must be told our church is a democratic church and always has been despite the inability of much of the prelacy to understand it is. If it is not, then there is no Trinity for there is no Holy Spirit.

The theology of "NO" can no longer be tolerated, unless it can defend itself. A part of this latest "Instruction" cannot. It must be quarreled with, and that must be done with great force.

H. CARROLL SHEEHY, JR.

Request for help

Worcester, Mass.

To the Editors: The Sts. Francis and Therese Catholic Worker House needs your help. On April 1, we suffered a terrible fire which left our entire community of nine adults and one infant homeless. Since then, I and another Catholic Worker have been to court for prayer witnesses against a local nuclear weapons manufacturer. The combination of the fire and our jail terms has forced us to appeal for help.

A potential new home exists right across the street, but we need $65,000 to buy and repair it. Until our fire, we gave shelter to the homeless, offered food to those in need, prayed together daily, had meetings for clarification of thought, printed an eight-page newspaper, and took part in peace vigils and civil disobedience. We are praying for a miracle which will return us to our work soon. Donations can be sent to: Sts. Francis and Therese Catholic Worker; c/o 112 Woodland St.; Worcester, MA 01610.

SCOTT SHAEFFER-DUFFY

Radical implications

Philadelphia, Pa.

To the Editors: Paul Giurlanda's important article ["The Challenge of Post-Liberal Theology," January 30] calls attention to an emerging body of theological reflection. He is quite correct, I believe, in his contention that what he terms "post-liberal" theology is going to change the traditional questions of theology and of philosophy as well. Giurlanda writes well when he says that, according to this post-liberal view, "the philosophical problem of truth" becomes inseparably tied to the way particular communities live out their understandings of life's meaning and ends. However, by plunging the reader *in medias res* of the post-liberal conversation, Giurlanda also speeds us to an over-hasty agreement with one particular post-liberal position, that advanced by Stanley Hauerwas.

The "post-liberal" theologians Giurlanda discusses share a common focus on what one of them, George Lindbeck, calls the priority of language to experience. By this Lindbeck means that shared practices of interpretation and response shape our experiences of the world in profound ways. So profound that there can be no division in principle between criteria or conditions or meaning, the task usually allotted to philosophy, and the substance of a particular interpretation, with "substance" the usually accepted contribution of theology. In other words, the meaning of "knowledge" and even "reason" depends upon the practical relationships and attitudes normative for a given community. This conclusion, as Giurlanda points out, has quite radical implications for biblical religion, which stands upon its interpretation of texts canonical for the community of believers.

This conclusion certainly makes compelling Stanley Hauerwas's question of how to communicate beyond one's own linguistic community, once the communal basis of knowledge is recognized.

Thought

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However, Giurlanda begins to conflate this general point — which, if his theory is correct, must actually be a recognition that our contemporary cultural situation is precisely one of standing within several communities of discourse — with Hauerwas's answer to his own question. Hauerwas's answer is that the Christ-story of suffering, loving response to others provides, for Christians, the normative way toward the eschatological universal of human community, a way realized by fidelity to this response. But for Hauerwas's interpretation of the Christian "foundation story," this answer entails a choice between the church, conceived as this community of witness, and the "world."

While this position is consistent with recognition of the priority of language to experience, it is by no means entailed by it. Neither is Hauerwas's position entailed in any simple way by the biblical narrative in itself. Christians have since the beginning asked over and over again the normative meaning of Christ's acts of suffering love. Indeed, much of the New Testament, as well as the tradition of the church, can be seen as a continuing effort at interpretation. But this interpretive effort has not resulted in smooth unanimity, or anything like consensus around Hauerwas's position. This is not to rule Hauerwas's interpretation out of consideration, but it is a reminder that, like it or not, the meaning of the texts normative for Christians is significantly bound up with the *whole* history of the Christian community's struggles over interpretation, that is, with its tradition. The church's history is full of efforts to claim a new revelation or a privileged recovery of the purity of an original one — with results of something far less, alas, than the coming of the Peaceable Kingdom.

As Giurlanda presents it, "post-liberal" theology has implications that conceive the church in pure contraposition to a corrupt world. But, as I have tried briefly to suggest, this is a too narrow, and ultimately unhistorical, way of understanding the priority of language to experience in Christian life. Important strands of Christian tradition, not least the Catholic, have strongly emphasized that concern with the good of this present world is integral to a faithful response to grace. The superiority of one interpretation to the other cannot be based on claims to superior purity alone.

The priority of language to experience is a very significant theological and philosophical proposition, and the interpretive argument put forward by Hauerwas is a serious and important one. Only one cannot, as Giurlanda suggests, found the interpretive thesis in a privileged way by means of post-liberal philosophy. That would be to lose the point of the post-liberal approach, which is to return us, without conceptual trump cards, to the church as a community of interpretation and even argument.

WILLIAM M. SULLIVAN

Owning the loans

Omaha, Neb.

To the Editors: Kenneth Jameson's "Mortgaging a House of Cards" [February 22] was disappointing. There can be little question about the importance of the third-world debt. But there is an aspect of the problem that, except for a glancing allusion to "the lenders of last resort," Dr. Jameson passes over in silence. I refer to the matter of the ownership of the money loaned. The international banks are remote, seemingly impersonal, and perhaps evoke a faintly sinister image. But as Dr. Jameson implies, they are not the owners of the money, merely the conduits through which someone else's money flows. It is tempting to treat them as self-seeking or uncaring — and they may be — but that is largely irrelevant. To a significant extent, ownership of these funds must be vested in the American people, and probably a substantial fraction of it is derived from our pension funds. Most of us have so little sense of personal affluence that we are inclined to think it's someone else's money at stake. But that is probably not true.

What one should have liked to learn from an economist would have been a better analysis of the structure of this situation, i.e., what fraction of this mass of undoubtedly bad debts represents "assets" now being held by our pension funds, and what fraction of our pension funds has effectively been invested in the third world. And what would be the impact on our own personal financial futures of writing it all off as bad debt? I do not for a moment suggest that my property rights are not highly qualified by the needs of my brothers and sisters. Two millennia of Catholic social thought make it quite clear I do not have an unqualified right to property, even to my own pension funds — particularly if the price of enjoying them may be the grinding poverty of a substantial fraction of those now living on this planet.

Nevertheless, a thorough understanding of the problem requires an analysis of the impact on what Dr. Jameson calls "the lender of last resort." Listing these debts with our assets may be illusory, but still it seems to preserve the current functioning of the pension system. Would that functioning be seriously disrupted by writing them off? I don't know. We may, *de facto,* be caught in the equivalent of a large pyramid scheme, in which those who have retired in the past were able to get out with their investment intact, but those who retire in the future may not. I don't, of course, know whether this is true, because I don't know the importance of this third-world debt for our pension funds.

Any solution to this problem that will be workable will require an analysis and understanding of this other side of the question — both from considerations of equity and of political practicability.

ROBERT P. HEANEY

The author replies:

Mr. Heaney asks an elaboration on my statement, "probably . . . you and I are to blame as well." For each of us has most likely benefited in some way from the debt game. Several points should be made:

To the extent that we (individually or through our pension plans) have stocks in banks, we have certainly benefited from the loans to the third world, for the major banks' profits in the late 1970s swelled precisely because of those loans. In 1977, 82.2 percent of Citicorp's earnings were from its international operations, and between 1977 and 1982 the ten largest banks obtained 48 percent of their earnings from international operations —

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and the third-world loans paid above the average return. The downside of this is seen in Citicorp's estimate that its profits may fall by $1 billion this year because of a $2.5 billion second-quarter write off after the Brazilian suspension of interest payments.

But few gained greatly from these profits, for wealth in the U.S. is highly concentrated. For example, the top 1 percent of wealth holders have over 25 percent of the total wealth. It is certainly true, however, that pension holdings have increased their share of wealth, from around 5 percent in 1955 to an estimated 39 percent in 1987.

The good news is that only 25 percent of their assets are in stocks, and of course the share in bank stocks would be substantially less.

The conclusion is that all of us in pension programs benefited from the loans, and should bear some of the costs. However, neither the benefits nor the costs have been large, for most of us. Of much greater concern to pension plan participants should be the *unfunded* portion of their plans and the inadequacies of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation. In thinking about third-world debt, we might do better to place it in the context of the Hardy quote used by Keynes in his *The Economic Consequences of the Peace:*

> Observe that all wide sight and self-command
> Deserts these throngs now driven to demonry
> By the Immanent Unrecking. Nought remains
> But vindictiveness here amid the strong
> And there amid the weak an impotent rage.

KENNETH JAMESON

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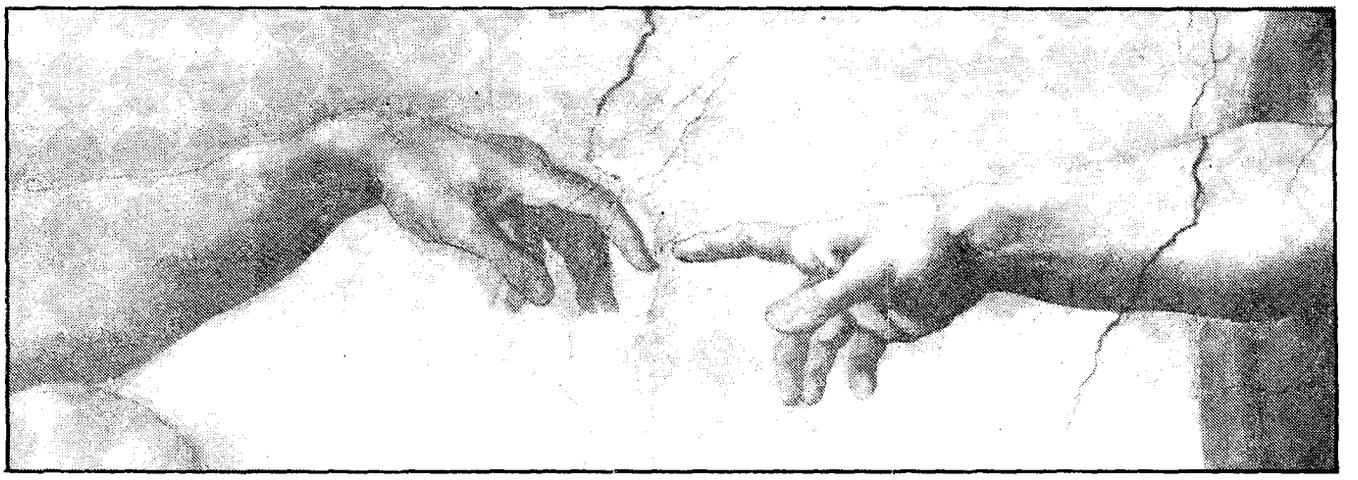

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD

In a celebrated passage in the *Quartets*, T.S. Eliot tells us that words "strain,/Crack, and sometimes break." That fracture of language occurs, more often than not, because language is used too much, not too little, and further, the overuse happens in too familiar settings. The great task of the theologian (as well as the reflection believer) is to recover the urgency and the thickness of words with which we have studded our lives so easily and so often. It is one thing to pray for daily bread in the suburbs and quite another to utter those words in a *favela*. . . .

But for those of us who use the well-worn words with such facility, there is another, less dramatic, challenge: to stand back and ask ourselves what it is we are saying. It is when we do that that gesture becomes something more. . . .

And so it is with the Lord's Prayer. Like every great prayer, we read it but it also reads us. . . . If we pray for the kingdom to come but, in truth, are quite satisfied with the way things are, then we are like Claudius in the prayer scene of *Hamlet*. The words fly up but the thoughts stay here below; words without thoughts ne'er to heaven go.

There is a lesson to be drawn from all this, and it is a simple but profound one. It may take daring to speak the words of the Lord's Prayer as the liturgy insists. It takes even more daring to listen to them.

—Lawrence S. Cunningham,
"We Dare to Say 'Our Father' "
Commonweal, May 8, 1987

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